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ABSTRACT

This book is about the relationship between cooperation and social responsibility and children's self-esteem. This book shows teachers how to teach children skills that aid cooperation and social responsibility. Chapter 1 examines the problems with competitive and individualistic teaching strategies. Cooperation is explored in greater detail in Chapter 2. This chapter looks at the arenas where cooperation is learned and practiced, including the family and friendships, and provides an understanding of cooperation issues that will help teachers to implement cooperative methods in their classrooms. The self-esteem model that this book is based on is described in Chapter 3. This chapter and Chapter 4 examine the connections between cooperation and self-esteem and show how a learning environment dedicated to cooperation and building a sense of social responsibility enhances different aspects of self-esteem. Chapter 4 also includes a discussion of conformity and the use of rewards. Chapter 5 describes various influences on classroom climate and offers many suggestions for teachers seeking to implement cooperative strategies. Chapter 6 describes seven basic strategies for enhancing cooperation and social responsibility. Chapter 7 looks at special problems, including why some children do not respond well to cooperative contexts. Suggestions to school administrators and school boards for using their influence to help build and to support a cooperative climate at the school and district level are presented in chapters 8 and 9. The appendixes provide a checklist and lists of techniques relating to building self-esteem. (ABL)

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Reynold Bean

Cooperation, Social Responsibility & Other *Skills*

Using the 4 Conditions of Self-Esteem in Elementary and Middle Schools

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Cooperation, Social Responsibility & Other *Skills*

About the Author

Reynold Bean, EdM, has been a teacher, school administrator, therapist, educational consultant and school board member and has managed counseling agencies and residential treatment facilities for at-risk teens. He has conducted workshops on self-esteem throughout the United States for many years.

With Harris Clemes, he developed and published a model for self-esteem in 1976. *The Four Conditions of Self-Esteem: A New Approach for Elementary and Middle Schools* (ETR Associates, 1991) presents this model and is the parent book of a four-book series:

Cooperation, Social Responsibility and Other Skills
Individuality, Self-Expression and Other Keys to Creativity
Positive Risks, Challenges and Other Paths to Success
Honesty, Perseverance and Other Virtues

This series of books shows how the principles of each condition can be applied throughout elementary and middle school programs to improve the learning environment.

Bean has authored or coauthored many other books having to do with children, self-esteem and education, including *Elementary Principal's Handbook: New Approaches to Administrative Action* (Parker Publishing); *Self-Esteem: The Key to Your Child's Well-Being* (G. P. Putnam); *How to Be a Slightly Better Parent, How to Help Your Child Succeed in School, How to Raise Children's Self-Esteem, How to Raise Teenagers' Self-Esteem, How to Teach Children Responsibility, How to Discipline Children without Feeling Guilty* and *How to Develop Your Children's Creativity* (Price, Stern, & Sloan).

Cooperation, Social Responsibility & Other *Skills*

Using the Four Conditions of Self-Esteem in Elementary and Middle Schools

Reynold Bean, EdM

ETR Associates
Santa Cruz, California
1992

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Preface

There's talk going around about our society falling apart. People are concerned when the media incessantly presents us with dramatic evidence that the fabric of social life is being torn to shreds. Murders, delinquency, deteriorating cities and homelessness are only some of the rising indications of something terribly wrong going on. People feel unsafe under circumstances they never thought about before. Teachers in inner city schools receive hazard pay. There are long-standing discussions concerning the breakdown of values. Most of us are confused about what is happening, and the children are more confused than we are.

When people are nice to each other, doing things that truly support and encourage feelings of community, compassion and tolerance, the story makes the nightly news. It's really special! This fact is scarier than stories of death and destruction.

I don't know if things are becoming worse. They were pretty bad where I grew up, so I've generally been pleased with what I've discovered about life across the United States over the years. But I know there is a dark side to everyone, a side that

is more concerned with self than others, that feels angry and embattled, that seeks to lash out. This dark side becomes activated when conditions force people to defend themselves, to fear for their future, to lose hope and to feel cut off from those forces they believe are good and nurturing.

The dark side of human nature may be more interesting but, at the same time, it's more destructive. We're fascinated with it. Much of what we do in psychology, social welfare, criminal justice, education and other human services is responding to this dark side. An incredible amount of time, energy and material resources are spent in dealing with this dark side and fixing what it destroys.

This may seem an unlikely introduction for a book that can be useful to teachers of small children. But it is against this reality that the topic of this book must be understood. Educators can improve the conditions of life in our society by consciously, persistently and passionately showing children that cooperative behavior and an active sense of social responsibility are valuable tools to have. They promote success and satisfaction. They have long standing value. They feel good and they produce rewards for those people who practice them.

Educators, like others, feel victimized by social forces over which they have no control. There is something powerful that can be done, though, to change the social matrix. This is to create learning contexts that produce a sense of connection and mutual support so powerful that children will be irrevocably influenced by them. Actually, little else can be done.

This book is one of a series showing how self-esteem principles can be used as powerful themes in school programs. These themes can influence every aspect of a program, including the curriculum—what's taught and how it's taught. This series of books is based on the belief that there are a

variety of ways to achieve excellence in education, but *any path to excellence will be based on concrete methods that enhance children's self-esteem.*

The unique contribution of these books is to show how an important educational theme can be aligned with self-esteem enhancement to have a powerful impact on children. The theory of self-esteem underlying all the material is described in detail in *The Four Conditions of Self-Esteem,* the first book of the series.

Cooperation, Social Responsibility and Other Skills shows teachers of elementary and middle school how to develop classroom and school practices that enhance children's capacity for cooperation and social responsibility, while ensuring that learning is active, fun and relevant. This book is about building self-esteem through enhancing children's sense of connection to things outside themselves.

The goal of this book is to encourage children to participate in a social system that has value and values them, a system that inspires them to have a commitment to it. Children can learn skills to promote such systems wherever they may find themselves, both now and in the future, whether those social systems are families, teams, gangs, ethnic groups, communities, states, nations, nature or the world as a whole.

The chief method for developing these skills in children is to develop classrooms and schools, and what occurs within them, as social systems that command commitment and allegiance because they fulfill basic emotional needs. The alternative to this is having children exercise loyalty to groups that are in opposition to the school.

The challenge is to create a school in which cooperation and a sense of social responsibility are more than manifestations of teaching techniques. Cooperative learning, learning teams, democratic decision making, school climate and other

attributes of schools that are good social systems are all important to this effort. But schools and classrooms that impress students long into their futures are those that convey an ethic, a way of life, a deep and pervasive sense of a meaningful reality, even if this reality can't be put into specific words. Building feelings of connection is more than skill building; it influences the way children feel about themselves and others. It becomes part of the matrix of children's self-esteem, close to the core of their selves.

This book will show how children, teachers, parents and the community can contribute to creating and maintaining such a school. The process involves influencing individual children, classroom practices, teacher support, parent involvement, and the school and the community supporting each other.

As is often the case, the ideas that are encompassed in this book began to be important to me in my childhood. My earliest and best memories of school are associated with the ways friendship intruded into the competitive and individualistic aspects of learning. My friends and I banded together in order to make school more interesting and challenging. In those days, the term "gang" had a more benign and affiliative sense to it. My buddies and I were a gang that made some trouble in school, but weren't mean-spirited or excessively angry in doing so.

In looking back at that time, I can now see how so many of the satisfactions of that period were associated with cooperative action, sometimes against the school and teacher, but more often in the pursuit of youthful experience, and for mutual support. From helping each other with yardwork so we could all go someplace together, to covering with each others' parents so punishments were reduced, the cooperative ethic infused our relationships. It set a good stage for getting along with people for the rest of my life.

This predisposition to cooperativeness prepared me for later experiences in which I was able to use cooperative skills in the service of humanistic motives, working with others in social projects and in management positions in social service agencies. Cooperation was always a better way to get things done.

As a management trainer and organizational development consultant, I constantly observed how work gets done in the largest corporations through cooperation among line workers and managers. When it's missing, productivity, profits and worker satisfaction go down the tubes. As a marriage and family counselor I was witness to the beneficent impact of cooperation in families and relationships.

Over time, the importance of this notion, that cooperation and a sense of social responsibility are connected, impressed itself on me. And I saw how effective teachers used that connection to produce superior results in their classrooms. Many excellent teachers showed me that while teaching cooperative skills may be hard, creating cooperative climates made the task much easier.

One of my earliest intellectual influences was Petr Kropotkin's *Mutual Aid,* a venerable old work that ought to be dusted off for these trying times in which we live. Early ecological and ethological writings impressed me with the underlying integration of all of Life in the service of promoting itself. Darwin's writings were more about how organisms support each other to thrive than about "nature red in tooth and claw." The young intellectual in me saw the essence of cooperation in Natural Law and evolution itself, as well as among my closest friends and mentors. The lessons were impressive.

In a more current and practical vein, the editor of this series, Kay Clark, as well as her colleagues at ETR Associates, have shown once again that their instincts for cooperation produce better books than this author's inclination to compete

over every word. You, the reader, benefit from their commitment to cooperative work and ETR's dedication to socially responsible publishing.

Introduction

In the not so distant past most people believed the world was flat. This belief was supported by many authorities and, for a long time, those who espoused the notion that the earth was round were not well treated. A round world just didn't make sense to most people, although observation and imagination finally did show it really was a "world without end." When the evidence was overwhelming most people came on board. Only a few held out for obscure reasons. The earth looks somewhat flat, it feels more or less flat, but it isn't flat!

With this little historical observation, I want to introduce an analogy: the relationship between cooperation and competition in our schools and classrooms. The evidence accumulated for over fifty years in numerous studies shows that cooperative teaching and learning practices result in higher achievement for children. It's not as if the evidence were mixed or slightly tilted toward the benefits of cooperation; the accumulated data con-

sistently show children learn more and retain it longer under cooperative learning strategies.*

Cooperation Versus Competition

Despite the evidence, cooperation, as a major theme for educational practice, has always seemed a bit suspect, especially when set off against competition. There is a general belief that competition is at the root of our democratic political system and free market economy. Some fear that too much emphasis on cooperation may undermine our nation's commitment to respect the individual's liberty and autonomy.

Competition has been considered the crucible of character. Children are supposed to be made into tough-minded, entrepreneurial types who will make our society the world's leader. Sports are the modern day version of ancient religious practices connecting the secular world with the realm of the gods. Sports heroes and heroines are granted privileges formerly only given to royalty. Everyone wants to be a winner; losers are losers. Captains of industry are viewed, and they view themselves, as people who manifest the virtues of individuality, reflective of the competitive context in which we supposedly live.

Yet, competition at the level of children's everyday experience in school has nothing to do with maintaining a free-

* I have included a short bibliography of works that review and summarize the data for readers who want to pursue the matter. Because of the overwhelming evidence showing cooperation beats competition as a context for learning, I will not repeat the discussion here. Be forewarned, I subscribe to the evidence! I am convinced competition has a generally negative effect on learning, especially for those children who, being at-risk, are most in need of a nurturing learning environment. I recommend that those of you who feel competitive tactics in teaching have general value read the material. Even if you teach P.E. or are a coach! Why? Because I know this: If you are successful as a leader in athletics, you have found a way to introduce cooperation as a dominant teaching strategy, despite the apparently competitive nature of the field.

market economy. And knowing how to cooperate in reaching common goals seems to have everything to do with worker satisfaction, productivity and improving product quality. In other words, people who accomplish things in the everyday work world do so in cooperative environments, not competitive ones.

Nor does competition at the sociopolitical level, such as insuring a competitive atmosphere in large industries to preclude collusion or price-fixing, have much to do with how a child feels about having lost again in a competitive activity in which only the smartest, quickest, largest or loudest children are likely to succeed.

The task of educators as we come to the end of this most interesting century is to find ways to help more children learn more, find satisfaction in learning and develop a range of flexible skills that will maximize their employment opportunities and to instill a wish in the upcoming generation to maintain and enhance the democratic opportunities available to our liberty-loving population. Most of the world seems to seek these qualities.

If we want to achieve this, we must employ educational approaches that really work, practices that conform to the way children learn and achieve satisfaction. Cooperation is the basis of success in schools, as it is in nearly every productive aspect of life. Competition doesn't produce the benefits attributed to it. The world was never flat, not even at the beginning!

Teaching Children to Be Successful

Despite this knowledge of the value of cooperation, competitive practices are still widely used in most schools and classrooms, even by teachers whose every instinct and intuition tell them these practices don't work. Grading, spelling bees,awards

and competitive sports all are deeply ingrained in our cultural sensibilities. Questioning their value smacks of heresy.

These are all different expressions of a basic commitment to competition; each ensures that while some children will be successful, most will not. Think of all the factors in your school and classroom where the competitive ethos is obvious in practices that result in only one or a few children being winners.

Teachers are asked to teach so all children are successful, but to do so in a context—a competitive environment—that actually results in most children not being successful enough. Ethnicity, gender and handicaps are not supposed to differentiate children's opportunities for success in school, but the competitive context in which most children are expected to learn results in such differentiation.

Competition has its subtle side, too. Part of the competition rests inside the children themselves. Some fight hard to win; others give up the struggle before it begins. We even have a name for the process children use to avoid competition in schools. It's called *low motivation* and it's considered a "disease" that some children have for which there seems no cure. And since it's a disease, it's locus is within children—like a cancer—something educators can't do anything about. We also get angry at parents who send their kids to school with this disease, afraid they'll infect others, as if they had the flu or head lice.

A strong tendency exists to look at cooperation as a functional strategy for a group of people to reach common goals. This is true in most situations. But cooperative behavior is not only practiced because it's efficient; it's practiced because it feels good! Think of your own experience.

Remember times when you were part of a cooperative team, task force or group that was successful in accomplishing its goals. The experience may have started with some tension

and ambiguities regarding task, goals or personnel. But as the group became more integrated and functional, it became increasingly more difficult to tell whether the "high" people were getting from the experience resulted from task achievement or the level of affection, inclusion and integration. At some point, the wish to be part of a group that values each member and in which there is a positive attachment among people becomes blended with task orientation, so it's often hard to separate the two motives.

Friendship groups often do things just to have a reason for getting together. We've all called friends and said, "Let's do something!" Then the group finds a goal or objective for itself that permits it to reenergize the bonds of affection and affiliation that keep everyone friends with everyone else.

Even in researching cooperative behavior, it seems the cart is often before the horse. It's usually assumed that people engage in cooperative behavior to complete specific tasks or goals. But sometimes—perhaps more often than our rational inclinations accept—we find a task or goal just so we can stay emotionally connected with those we like or love.

This is why cooperative teaching and learning practices work. Not because they are more virtuous than competitive ones; they work because of the way they affect children's self-esteem. This book will show you how and why.

How Is Cooperation Used in This Book?

Many definitions of the word or concept of cooperation exist due to extensive research on the benefits of cooperative learning strategies. Cooperation usually involves a group having some common goal and dividing up the work required to reach it, resulting in everyone learning what's required. There are numerous variations of this basic idea.

These variations include learning teams, jig-saw methods,* and small group process techniques (see Johnson and Johnson, 1991). I will refer to some of these methods later, but this book is not designed to describe these methods in detail. Rather, it is about the way teachers can deal with feelings individual children have that enhance or undermine their ability to benefit from cooperative learning strategies. Furthermore, it shows how teachers and administrators can work together to create classroom and school climates that enhance cooperative learning methods.

Proponents of cooperative learning assert that it raises children's self-esteem. Much research supports this. I will show how enhancing children's self-esteem supports cooperative learning methods, no matter which methods are used. And I will explore the complex association between how children feel, and how they behave and learn.

When you're in a classroom watching children engage in well-functioning cooperative learning activities, or any activities requiring cooperative behavior (such as sports), you notice things other than measurable academic outcomes. Kids often seem happier, more engaged and more enthusiastic than when subject to ordinary learning activities, e.g., working alone or in whole class activities such as lectures or discussions.

Adopting such teaching strategies as part of a program includes having clear goals and objectives and teaching children often complex tactics for employing cooperative learning approaches. But children cooperate, one way or another, whether or not they know they're working toward common goals. Or they compete and conflict without reference to their objective. The actual give and take of school behavior is much

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* The jig-saw method of teaching has the teacher divide an assignment into parts so that each child in a group learns an aspect of what's being taught and shares the information in a variety of ways with others in the group. Cooperation is thus designed into the learning experience.

more ambiguous than a research design; the influence of research on practice is usually slow. The ability of most teachers to apply complex research-based teaching strategies in the heat and energy of the classroom is limited.

This is *not* another book in the literature of cooperative learning, it's about more ambiguous, but more pressing issues that affect the moment to moment experience of teachers in the classroom. How kids get along with each other is the underlying issue teachers confront daily. How children get along in learning activities, as well as the ordinary social interactions they have in the classroom or on the school grounds, will determine how most teachers feel at the end of a hard day's work. When the overall classroom climate is one of cooperation, when children are actively engaging, demonstrating a high level of goodwill and mutual affection and respect, not only is the learning climate good for children, but the teaching climate is also optimal for teachers.

Cooperation and social responsibility must be seen in this overall light if they are going to be ideas with significant impact on what occurs in schools. The importance of cooperative learning strategies, as shown repeatedly by research, is that children learn more when these strategies are used. If, at the same time, the climate for cooperative and mutually supportive behavior is very strong in the classroom or school, children will feel good about being there and fundamental intentions of educators more likely will be realized.

In addition to goals defined in a specific learning program, a cooperative classroom climate has the potential to fulfill the following intentions:

- Children should have a high degree of satisfaction from the work they do.
- Children should enjoy learning so it becomes a more deeply ingrained practice in their lives.

- Children's respect and affection for teachers and the teaching process should be spontaneous and sincere.
- Children's commitment to school and what occurs there should be high.
- Children's experience in school should contribute to higher rather than lower levels of self-esteem.

For this reason I have a very broad definition of cooperation that includes things neither easily measurable nor observable. This definition is so broad it involves every segment of the school's program, including how teachers get along with each other.

We will look at classrooms and schools as arenas in which children seek positive emotional bonds with peers and adults, as well as places in which cooperative behavior is used for functional ends. Do children learn more under cooperative teaching practices because such practices have some special instrumental value in transmitting information or because more kids just feel good when they learn in such an environment? It's a chicken and egg situation, but every teacher knows children learn more when they feel good.

Cooperation is about getting things done *and* having people feel connected to each other. If we teach children to cooperate and have a sense of social responsibility, we will enable them to feel good in the process of learning such skills and to use these skills later in life. Although most studies of cooperative behavior show it results in higher performance, some studies also show that children and adults feel better about each other, even if the group doesn't achieve a higher level of performance.

That's not bad! Lots of teachers, especially in tough schools, would settle for kids feeling better about each other, which presupposes they feel better about themselves.

What This Book Is About

This book is about the relationship between cooperation and social responsibility and children's self-esteem. It's an important connection; your classroom or school can be built upon such a principle.

When we look at self-esteem, we try to understand what the predisposition is in children's feelings that influences their willingness and ability to learn and to use the skills of cooperation and social responsibility.

Every teacher knows some children are more cooperative than others. Some children never seem to learn to cooperate no matter what you do. Still others have such a penchant for relationships and cooperation that it's hard to get them to exercise individual initiative in anything that smacks of competitiveness.

This book will show you how to teach children skills that aid cooperation and social responsibility. You will learn the relationship between children's self-esteem and their ability to learn in a cooperative environment. And you will learn how to influence the way children feel, as well as how to structure their environment to predispose them to cooperative behavior.

Some teachers seem more adept at using cooperative practices than others. I will show why this is not a mystery and how all teachers can learn to improve the climate of cooperation and social responsibility in their classrooms.

Chapter 1 examines the problems with competitive and individualistic teaching strategies. It presents ways to promote cooperation in the classroom and examines how a child's sense of social responsibility develops.

Cooperation is explored in greater detail in Chapter 2. This chapter looks at the arenas where cooperation is learned and practiced, including the family and friendships, and provides

an understanding of cooperation issues that will help you implement cooperative methods in your classroom.

The self-esteem model this book is based on is described in Chapter 3. This chapter and Chapter 4 examine the connections between cooperation and self-esteem and show how a learning environment dedicated to cooperation and building a sense of social responsibility enhances different aspects of self-esteem. Chapter 4 also includes a discussion of conformity and the use of rewards.

Classroom and school climate, that vague yet pervasive factor, has a dominating effect on children. Chapter 5 describes various influences on classroom climate and offers many suggestions for teachers seeking to implement cooperative strategies.

Peers and friends are most often recognized as educational factors when their effect is negative. We still don't use what we know about human relationships to structure peer relations as a positive learning influence. These and other matters fundamental to understanding how children's self-esteem and learning are affected by schooling are explored in Chapter 6.

Chapter 7 looks at some special problems, including why some children *don't* respond well to cooperative contexts. You will learn what you can do about these nonresponsive children to increase their motivation to engage in learning and enhance their capacity to learn.

Administrators and school boards have a strong influence on school climate. Their educational philosophies influence policies, standards, expectations, rules and inclusion of staff and community in educational decisions. Suggestions for using this influence to help build and to support a cooperative climate at the school and district level are included in Chapters 8 and 9.

This book is not a new program so much as it is a way to look at children and assess how you deliver what they need. It

is also about creating an environment in a school that deeply influences both practice and the way adults and children feel about their experience in that school.

Teachers should have maximum freedom to teach in different ways to meet children's needs. I believe the environment of a school or classroom, the way the experience as a whole affects people, has much to do with what is learned and how performance occurs. This book is about creating such a context. It provides a way to look at children that teachers can share with each other, while pursuing teaching methods that fit their own styles.

The Overall Challenge

For cooperation to become a deeply held value and for a sense of social responsibility to be something children carry with them for their entire lives, the context in which these two educational concepts are implemented is critical. The school can become a social system having a significant impact on children who pass through it. Individual classrooms need to be crucibles where children's best qualities and highest capacities are evoked and shaped by persistent and consistent values and practices.

The context for developing cooperative and socially responsible attitudes in children is well known. Children need a situation that allows them to feel they're participating in a social system they value and which values them. This feeling results in a commitment to that system's welfare and maintenance. It's a potential children already have and exercise in many ways: in families, in their playgroups, among their friends and in any place where the group or social system permits them to feel important.

Sometimes important social systems don't meet children's

needs for affiliation. Dysfunctional families and/or threatening neighborhoods are too often the characteristic experience of many children. Such children come to school unprepared to deal with a social system that asks something of them while, at the same time, it offers something to them. Children who have not felt valued before coming to school are not likely to trust a system that only holds a promise.

If schools don't, from the beginning, elicit deep feelings of connection in children, children may seek these feelings through groups that are oppositional to the schools. Street gangs; families who devalue the importance of education; fantasy affiliations, such as to sports teams; and premature sexuality and marriage too often substitute for positive affiliations having long-range value.

Mistrust is established when children experience school as a place where their needs are not met, where competitive or individualistic teaching methods place them at an immediate disadvantage. Mistrust grows quickly in an environment that doesn't value the affiliations they already have, e.g., friends, family, ethnicity.

Children suffer from not feeling connected to things and people outside themselves. If the environment is not arranged to persistently and consistently offer experiences which enhance their sense of connection and validate the connections they already have, they will remain at a disadvantage. Cooperative teaching methods and emphasizing social responsibility are important ingredients in building such an environment, but they are only tactics in an overall strategy of building a social system in which children feel valued—a system which they in turn can trust.

Chapter

1 Three Ways to Organize a Classroom: Competition, Individualism, Cooperation

Americans like to use practical, measurable productivity as the standard of accomplishment. If something can be counted, measured or weighed, if its magnitude is determined by comparing it with something else, Americans, overall, tend to be comforted.

Teachers and administrators are torn over an issue central to education. They want to see children making objective, measurable progress, but at the same time they want children to feel good about themselves and school. Many teachers are concerned every time they give children a test. The comparisons made from the results will cause some children to feel successful, while many others will doubt their capabilities. Testing methods are a controversial subject in education these days.

We measure children's abilities so we can compare them to each other or to a normative standard. Children measure themselves similarly. Whenever we measure something, some children will have more of it than others. While we can measure anything, we can't measure everything, because there isn't

enough time and we don't agree about what should be measured in education.

But there is a different way to look at this matter. Sometimes when we think we're measuring children's academic ability, many children are actually being measured on *the success of their response to the way they're being taught.* This chapter looks at three different ways to organize classroom relationships and teaching strategies, and shows how they have different effects on children.

Competition, individualism and cooperation affect self-esteem in different ways. This has dramatic implications for the way children learn. I'll show why the combination of building cooperation and enhancing social responsibility is the most powerful way to create learning environments.

Measuring Ability Versus Measuring Success

Within every school, there are teachers who subscribe to the standard of measuring ability by determining how much of something children know well enough to report on a test of some sort.

Measuring ability becomes more and more diversified as we get away from simply counting the number of a type of problem children can answer correctly. But some feel there is small difference between measuring children's ability to retain information and report it back on a test and measuring their ability to *use* information on another kind of test. Measuring ability of some sort is the constant. When we measure ability, some will have more of it and some less, whatever the ability we're measuring.

Within each school there are teachers who judge success in ways tests don't measure. They like to see kids light up. They

feel enthusiasm, commitment, involvement, responsibility, self-esteem and a child's feelings of personal accomplishment are among the most important outcomes of school experience. They know some kids come into their class smart and leave it smart.

Other kids come in with different skills. These children may never measure up to the brighter students, but they don't have to leave the class feeling less than adequate. There are factors other than measurable ability that can be important sources of children's feelings of satisfaction in school.

Is there a way to combine the intention to measure academic progress, so deeply rooted in our social and educational norms, and the desire to maximize the feelings of satisfaction children can achieve in school, so dramatically undermined by ability comparisons? A close look at three different approaches to organizing information in the classroom will show that, if there is such a way, it seems to rest in cooperative learning approaches.

Competition: Tilting the Playing Field

Competition is a way to organize work and relationships in order to get things done. Characteristically, there are rules and norms providing guidelines for the relationship, upon which the competitors need to agree. The most obvious example of "pure" competition is an athletic contest, in which the rules are clear and only differences in ability determine the outcome. Unlike cooperation, competition usually results in only one party in the relationship achieving the goal. Coming in second means you lost, even if the field is very large.

In economic or social affairs the term "level playing field" is used as a metaphor to describe a condition of pure competition in which neither party has an advantage over the

other, apart from the characteristics required by the "game." In modern professional sports, as an example, chemicals such as steroids "tilt" the playing field, introducing a factor that gives those who use them a distinct advantage apart from skill. In economic matters, different forms of institutional discrimination give some people an advantage that pure job-related ability doesn't. There are many factors that tilt playing fields in all aspects of human affairs, including schooling and children's opportunity to be successful.

Competition has been used as a teaching strategy for a long time. It's the rare teacher who doesn't resort to it for a variety of reasons: it motivates some children; it's an interesting alternative to whole class activities or individual seat work; it can be constructed like a game; and some believe it inspires positive attitudes that build character. There is little or no solid research evidence that competition does any of these things in any manner that has a positive influence on a large number of children. Although competition does seem to benefit some, the questions that go begging are, Who does it benefit, in what way and for how long?

Competition in the classroom appears in many forms. The most obvious is comparative grading, which allows children to measure their success against others. Whether grades appear on daily papers, tests or report cards, they are a standard experience of most children in most schools. It doesn't make much difference if the teacher thinks grades are important (and many teachers are beginning to doubt their usefulness), if the children, their friends and parents think so, the competitive feature of grades asserts itself and children compare themselves to others based on grades.

Competitiveness

Competitiveness is different from competition. While competition may be a complex interaction among a group of people guided by rules and norms, competitiveness is an internal disposition of an individual in which he or she measures personal performance on the basis of another's performance or against an abstract standard, seeking to beat others or surpass the standard. A classroom teacher can do away with competition by deleting overtly competitive activities, but it's difficult to eradicate competitiveness from children's feelings when it's supported in other ways.

Competitiveness is one manifestation of a basic human need. All human beings seem to need to express their skills and talents. This allows them to get feedback from others or from the task itself as to whether they are good enough to do what they set out to do. From the toddler stage on, children try to show how good, fast, strong, smart or tough they are to elicit praise, approval or acknowledgement. The degree to which children perceive themselves as successful is one factor determining their level of self-esteem.

The idea of *empowerment* is based on the presumption that if people, including children, are given the opportunity, resources and capability to make significant decisions for themselves, their successes, feelings of control and self-esteem will increase. Conversely, if children experience excessive failures in the things they attempt, they will feel increasingly powerless, to the point where it may become a chronic condition.

Fulfilling the need for "proving" one's competence to oneself results in feelings of competitiveness that are sometimes satisfied by a form of competition. What we lose sight of, though, is that our culturally determined inclination to competitiveness can create this disposition to compete.

Other ways exist for children to prove they're good enough. The most useful one in school is cooperative action toward common goals, in which children contribute from their own special skills and talents. It's primarily an accident of the social evolution of our society that feelings of competence are so often influenced by comparing one's own performance to another's.

The downside of competition is that, by definition, there are always more losers than winners. Any activity that ensures all participants reach a similar level of performance is not competitive, even though it may have game characteristics. Classroom and all-school activities involving competition ensure most children will lose. Those who persistently lose will learn methods to avoid playing the game so their feelings of powerlessness don't become overwhelming. Those who win persistently will want to continue to compete and will find avid supporters in a society that loves winners.

A significant question is whether the classroom is indeed a "level playing field"? Do all children have a real chance at winning in a competitive environment or is the "game" tilted in favor of certain children? The evidence is overwhelming: The playing field of the classroom is tilted!

Rather than devote the rest of this book to proving the assertion, let's just consider three factors: intelligence, physical capability and motivation.

Intelligence, Physical Capability and Motivation

We haven't yet completed our understanding of intelligence, but there are a few things we know about it. It is not evenly distributed throughout the population in the ways we try to measure it. Every measurement results in a distribution of scores. If school success depends to any degree on intelligence, those who are at the upper end of the distribution have a

singular advantage over others. Whether that advantage results from genetic factors, the parents' level of education, family expectations or the number and quality of books in the home matters little. All of these factors are distributed unevenly throughout a population for a variety of reasons.

Just looking at children in any classroom makes it clear that being the same age is no guarantee of having common physical characteristics. The variations within age groups in any physical measurement may be greater than the variation between adjacent age groups at every level of childhood and adolescence. In most instances there will be correlated variations in performance dependent on physical characteristics; for example, bigger children are usually stronger than smaller ones.

We arrange children in schools by age, not size, ensuring a broad variation in physical capabilities. If there is a relationship between some physical characteristics (stamina, coordination, dexterity) and *any* academic tasks, then those with more functional physical characteristics will have a unique advantage.

Motivation is an emotional factor conditioned by psychological forces existing in children's experience. It is often value driven. In other words, children's motivation to do something will be affected by their belief about how important it is. With respect to schooling, the family's background, values and beliefs condition most children's motivation for success, and every teacher knows how critical motivation is to the learning process.

Children are socialized by their family values, beliefs and background. Children can be victimized by those factors when their families have no history of success, benefit or results from schooling. Children from such families don't have the same enthusiasm for schooling as those children who come from families who value it more. This principle also works in reverse. Many children from poor, under-educated families are highly

motivated by their families to succeed, while children from wealthy, highly educated families have not been similarly motivated to work hard at school. The more motivated the child, all other factors being equal (family education level, intelligence, cultural experience, etc.) the more likely that child will do better in school.

Children come to school with a range of learning characteristics, some of which they have little or no control over. In competitive environments, children will be grouped or labeled according to the value those characteristics have to the learning tasks put before them. Because of this correlation between learning characteristics and tasks some children are successful, some are not, and some are downright failures. Insofar as educators know which characteristics are likely to be beneficial, we continue to permit certain children to be predictable failures in school. Competition and children's own inclination to competitiveness create the conditions for predictable failure.

The strange and awesome paradox of American education is that as more efforts are made to increase children's ability to perform academically in an increasingly competitive environment, the most disadvantaged children will fail more and more.

Individualism: Doing Your Own Work

Competition isn't the only way work is organized for children in classrooms. Much schoolwork is done individually, without reference to what others are doing. The symbolic statement representing this learning mode is, "Everybody do your own work!"

Both cooperation and competition are interpersonal situations, where one's own performance is conditioned in some way by what others are doing. Individualism requires children

to work alone. Some children are better at this type of learning than others. All-class activities, such as lectures, movies or everyone using a workbook at the same time, are traditional examples of the individualistic approach to teaching. Individualized instruction is a representation of this mode of teaching and learning.

Individualism as a teaching method should not be confused with individuality, an esteemed value in our society. But the two are often confused with each other in the same way competition and competitiveness are. Individuality has moral and ethical features that have to do with respect for the individual's rights and liberties and the opportunity to express one's own unique personality or capabilities, unencumbered by others. Our veneration of individuality as a cultural value leads us to make the person the important unit in most social considerations.

While encouraging children's individuality is a positive thing in our society, the narrow focus on individual responsibility for learning, e.g., "Do your own work," is clearly out of balance. The skills that allow some children to function competently in an individualistically oriented learning environment are not clearly related to children's basic cognitive and intellectual abilities.

Various instrumental learning skills are all more related to children's upbringing or physiological development than their intellectual capabilities, such as the ability to sit still for extended periods, the capacity to pay attention and the ability to ask for help only when it's needed. Individualism gives an advantage to children from certain kinds of homes over other children. Cooperative learning strategies level the influence of these factors and help children absorb some of these learning skills from their peers.

Considerable attention has been paid to individualism in the research on cooperation and competition. Many of the

bibliographic references will show the same relationship between cooperative learning strategies and individualistic learning strategies as between cooperative and competitive methods. In other words, teaching methods persistently engaging children in individual effort, e.g., working alone, outside competitive or cooperative settings, don't work as well as cooperative methods. They promote achievement at about the same level as competitive methods.

Nevertheless, there are some children who seem to do well working alone—children who work very hard when left to their own devices, who produce work at high levels and often demonstrate special creative aptitude at the same time they accomplish academic tasks. They do better when opportunity for individual recognition is available, unassociated with either competitive or cooperative methods. These children do their own work, but need the approval, acknowledgement and affirmation of adults to stay motivated.

When individualism is the teaching method employed, standards for achievement are set abstractly. Children don't measure themselves against each other. Instead, they are measured against a normative standard, often one unknown to them. Perfection may be the standard, but usually it isn't. Something akin to the average performance of a group is often seen as good enough. Getting through three-fourths of the workbook during a semester can be the standard determining whether a child is average, or above or below average.

Since individualized instruction is the idealized goal of the individualistic approach, a program designed for the unique or special attributes of each child is required. This is supposed to quell the onus of competition. But many teachers notice it doesn't stop competitiveness, since children still measure themselves against each other. Even in whole-class activities, the competition for having one's hand recognized when one knows the answer is obvious.

Individualized instruction has limitations often determined by class size and school economics, not by the method itself. Sufficient time and personnel are necessary to do individualized instruction well, as is an assessment array permitting accurate judgments about what individual children need to be working on. Often, individualized instruction becomes compromised, providing a limited array of opportunities around which many children's abilities are clumped.

While individualized instruction is an excellent idea, the vast numbers of children who have special learning difficulties entering the schools overwhelms teachers' ability to individualize as much as necessary. Individualized instruction also precludes using the rich learning opportunities afforded by cooperation, friendship, helpfulness and other group factors.

Technology, especially computerized instruction, has been offered as a more efficient and effective way to meet the special needs of individual children. Many beneficial ways are available to employ computers for children, but only if adjustments are made in class size and other learning modalities. Socialization needs and the "hands-on" teaching that high risk children seem to require are not satisfied by computer instruction, unless such programs allow more time for "low tech" positive interactions between teachers and children, and among children themselves. In classrooms and schools where children are already capable of dealing with highly individualistic learning methods, computerization adds otherwise unavailable opportunities. As stated above, however, this capability is often reflective of home life and, thus, is unevenly distributed among students.

Promoting Cooperation in the Classroom

Cooperative teaching/learning strategies result in higher levels of academic performance as well as a higher level of group cohesion. Children not only learn more intellectual content through cooperative methods, they also learn socially useful skills, such as tolerance, patience, teamwork, communication and other collaborative skills. The combination of cooperative methods and attention to issues of social responsibility is most likely to benefit children's self-esteem.

Cooperation can be looked at in at least two ways: One is the set of processes arising when a group attempts to solve a problem or reach an objective, e.g., the instrumental behaviors that help a group cooperate successfully. The second is the forms of interactions people engage in when part of a common social system, e.g., the things children do with and about each other as members of a classroom or school.

The following list shows many of the areas in which cooperation is at work in one way or another. All areas involve a variety of skills, as well as a set of attitudes that will more likely occur if the overall climate of the school supports them.

Two person activities. Children pair up for many things, in and out of the classroom. The pairings can be formal—set up by teachers—e.g., students practicing spelling words together; or they can be informal, spontaneous events, e.g., a recently absent student seeking information from a peer about what occurred the previous day. All two person activities are enhanced when both children have a cooperative, supportive attitude toward each other.

Two or more person activities requiring significant goal-oriented communication. Team sports at lunch or recess, some structured cooperative learning activities, a committee planning a party or a group attempting to decide who

gets to use the basketball first—all these activities benefit from children having a cooperative attitude and knowing tactics for reaching agreements.

Group or team situations requiring highly specialized roles or responsibilities. Sports is, of course, one example. Jig-saw teaching methods also fall into this category, as does the planning or clean up committee for a school dance. This type of situation often requires sophisticated cooperative skills or a highly structured plan-of-action defined, usually, by an adult.

Intragroup cooperation/intergroup competition. Again, team sports provide the basic model in this area, although this strategy is used extensively in classrooms to "split the difference" between cooperative and competitive philosophies. Examples include having teams for a spelling bee, giving rows of children names and comparing their behaviors ("Row 5 was ready first, so that row can leave first!"), or having teams working on common problems in math, but acknowledging those who finish first. The intention in this type of activity is that the competitive element provides motivation which the content of the activity itself does not. Teachers use this device to combat boredom and resistance.

Parallel activity in groups. Individual children work on tasks separately, requiring little or no interaction toward a common goal (e.g., a group circle engaging in silent reading). While not normally seen as "cooperative," such activities require a high level of empathy, sensitivity and self-restraint on the part of children so they do not interfere with each other. The attitudes and behaviors required to make such activities successful are quite similar to overt cooperative ones.

Intragroup cooperation/intergroup cooperation. Examples include committees with a common goal such as those required to put on a dance or party (e.g., music, food,

clean-up, decorations) or the instrumental sections of a school orchestra. The particular cooperative requirement of children in such groups is that they be able to work in small groups while remaining conscious of overall goals, and not feel competitive with groups other than their own.

Individual action to uphold group norms. It may seem to stretch boundaries of group behavior when a single individual is the focus of attention. But the collective behavior of all the individuals in a group determines the overall climate. When children choose to abide by classroom or school standards for promoting group cohesion, they are contributing to a cooperative climate as well as reflecting the impact of the climate.

Entering a room quietly when everyone is at work, not interrupting when another child is reciting, excusing an unintentional invasion of their space, such as when another child accidentally bumps them in line, or waiting their turn in a game—these are all examples of individual behavior contributing to an overall climate of cooperativeness. Good manners in general fall into this category, but then good manners, to social scientists, are norms and standards of behavior contributing to group cohesion. Molding this type of behavior is important to creating cooperation in a classroom. It's what social responsibility is about.

Helpfulness. Being helpful, in spontaneous as well as structured ways, is a form of cooperative behavior. When helpfulness is noticed, it's usually acknowledged, "Thanks, Sean, for helping pass out the papers." When it is permitted, encouraged and spontaneously engaged in, a very positive climate for children getting along with each other is established. Some children don't know how to be helpful since they have not been taught this at home. Knowing when to be helpful, how to do it and when to stop are skills of interpersonal relations.

Helpfulness is usually disregarded as an important form of cooperative behavior. Because of its spontaneity, it's hard to observe and measure. Teachers who emphasize the value of helpfulness in their classrooms notice it frequently because it's important to them. Educators have mixed feelings about helpfulness as an instrumental behavior in learning, since it clouds the degree to which children can demonstrate individual ability.

The various forms of cooperation require similar and overlapping skills. Some children seem to have more of the skills and the motivation to use them, others have less. One of the goals of this book is to show how, through using principles of building self-esteem, both the cooperative skills and the motivation of children can be enhanced.

When cooperative behavior is increased in all the above ways, a classroom and school climate is devoted to two important values: the intention to have a context where hard work and academics achievement are supported, and the intention to have a school climate where people, both adults and children, get along with each other in satisfying ways.

Social Responsibility in a Cooperative Classroom

Cooperation and social responsibility are strongly connected. One of the main purposes of this book is to show how a powerful educational environment can be built by combining these two concepts in practical ways. Yet there is an important distinction to make between the two ideas. The terms are often used interchangeably, but in everyday classroom practice there is an important functional distinction.

The distinction between cooperation and social responsibility is simple. We can best understand it by examining how

each is an important sphere of experience for children and teachers.

Cooperation is a method by which a group achieves common goals. There are two kinds of goals for which cooperation is best. One is to increase feelings of satisfaction in group members as the result of having their need for affiliation met. The other is to solve problems effectively through a fair and equitable distribution of work among group members.

Social responsibility, on the other hand, is experienced by individuals; it is not a group factor. It occurs when an individual acts in support of the rules, norms and standards of a group to which she or he belongs. The reference group can be as small as a group of friends or as large as one's ethnic group or country. In acting with social responsibility the individual promotes the interests of the group and preserves its power and integrity.

Social responsibility rests within an individual yet has implications for the well-being of the groups to which the individual belongs. Everyone is a group member at any given point in time; although the group to which one belongs changes and adjusts over time. Just look at a child's group membership during part of the day and see the number of different sets of norms, rules and standards to which that child must adjust. The following story will serve as an illustration.

How a Child's Sense of Social Responsibility Develops

Jason wakes in the morning. He shares the bedroom with his brother, who is still sleeping. Jason gets out of bed quietly, being careful not to wake his brother. Jason has promised his brother he'll be quiet. Each day he decides whether or not to honor the agreement.

Jason goes down the hall to the bathroom; he meets his dad. He knows his dad likes him to be cheerful in the

morning, but not to make too much noise. So Jason says quietly, "Morning, Daddy." He receives a smile and a quick kiss on the head from his Father.

After going into the bathroom, even though Jason has shut the door and is alone, the norms and standards of his family are operative. Does Jason follow the standards for putting the cap back on the toothpaste (even brushing his teeth is a rule), hang his towel on the rack or leave it on the floor, leave the toilet seat up or put it down? And how does Jason respond when his brother knocks on the door and wants to come in? The list of family rules, standards and norms for the bathroom is very long.

At breakfast when the family is gathered together, Jason faces another entire set of conditions. Now norms about the collective need to be honored. Mom, Dad, sister and brother sit at the table with Jason. There are many standards guiding appropriate table behavior that must be fulfilled before going to school.

Jason elects to walk to the school bus alone. Even though Jason is alone, there are rules and standards to consider. These are part of the neighborhood's and the community's wider social system—rules about cutting across lawns, saying hello to strangers or neighbors, tearing flowers from gardens and many social rules children must learn. Jason, without being conscious of what he's doing, is deciding if he will honor or break these many standards.

At the bus stop, Jason enters an entirely new social system, that of the children who catch the bus on this corner. It's a multi-aged group of boys and girls. Some are Jason's friends, others are not. There are no adults supervising, although everyone knows that Mrs. Smith across the street is always watching what they do! This group has a set of norms, rules and standards quite different from those Jason has so far experienced this morning.

Everyone knows you don't stand in line until you see the bus at the previous stop, several blocks down the street. Until then, the children push, shove and make loud noises or stand around laughing and chatting with each other. The smaller children stand off to the side.

When the bus comes, everyone pushes and shoves just enough not to hurt or hit each other, until a ragged line forms—a rule set by the school bus driver. Everyone knows the rules and standards at work. Most of the kids honor them, even the norm of pushing and shoving that adults don't approve of.

On the school bus, apart from the rules required by the school district, the children have a number of complex norms. Who sits with whom? How is food shared (despite it being against the rules)? What is permissible to say or do without being shamed or ostracized? Jason and his busmates are involved in a social network for the next twenty minutes that has most of the characteristics of a complex natural culture.

When Jason gets to school, he enters his classroom, an entirely different social system requiring his careful attention to a whole new complex set of rules, norms and standards. There are, on most days, 27 children, a teacher, an aide in the morning, and one or two parent volunteers who appear occasionally. As the day proceeds, Jason continues through new groups with different rules.

If Jason's a "good kid," he honors most of the rules and standards of the various systems he moves through this morning. He stops and looks at Mr. Spencer's prize roses, but he doesn't pick any. He pushes and shoves at the bus stop, but not too hard. He never knocks anyone down. He remembers to kiss his mom good-bye without being reminded. Because he's sitting behind the bus driver, Jason doesn't eat anything, since he doesn't want detention. He puts his sweater and lunch on the shelf quickly when entering his classroom. As the bell

rings, Jason is sitting at his desk leafing through a book. His teacher smiles at him and says, "It's nice to see you today, Jason."

Jason has a strong sense of social responsibility. He knows the rules in most situations. Norms and standards, things he can't even identify, infuse the unconscious decisions he makes and even his impulsive behavior. Jason knows how to get along with family, friends and classmates. He seems to instinctively act in socially acceptable ways when he's engaged in social systems with which he's familiar.

Jason even knows a few "meta-rules" (rules about rules). When put in social situations with which he's not familiar, he seems a bit shy as he stands back, seeing what he knows already that he can use in this new situation. Jason has learned there's a lot of overlap from one social system to another, but sometimes very different rules apply.

Why Social Responsibility Is Important

Social responsibility is uneven in most children. They know how to act better in some situations than in others. When they first come to school, their ability to function within rules, norms and standards is determined by the degree to which they've been taught responsibility at home. Many children are not prepared to take on the complex social systems of schools. They must be taught how to act if they are not to become problems.

Social responsibility and academic achievement are closely related (Wentzel, 1991). Children who know how to follow rules, norms and standards in schools do better academically. The research, similar to that for cooperation, is overwhelmingly in support of this finding. Spending time teaching children social responsibility in school pays big dividends in performance. When families don't teach their children, the schools must.

Social responsibility is more than children following rules and regulations with diligence. Highly abusive teaching methods have been known to bring about compliance with rules—methods most teachers wouldn't use. Children's willingness to act in socially responsible ways is as important as their willingness to act cooperatively. Ultimately, the level of their willingness, combined with the skills they pick up as they move through life, will determine how they fulfill the group aspect of social responsibility, i.e., the degree to which they seek to promote the interests of the group and preserve its functional integrity.

Families play a dominant role in preparing children for the social life of the classroom. But learning to abide by rules, standards and norms is not the most important goal of socially responsible behavior. In a democratic society, which depends upon an informed citizenry involved in social and political activities, schools must help motivate children to accept and manifest a commitment to participate in community affairs by providing grounding in skills that enable the children to do this.

Social responsibility begins when children learn about the norms, standards and rules that influence social cohesion in the various groups to which they belong, starting with the family, but ultimately ending far from it. Schools need to be crucibles for children either to manifest socially responsible behavior or to learn it if their families didn't teach them.

Furthermore, schools need to provide children with opportunities to learn and practice the skills of socially responsible behavior, allowing them to promote the interests of the groups to which they belong and preserve their functional integrity. Feeling a commitment to the welfare of one's family, friends, ethnic group, community, church or synagogue, state or nation is more than an intellectual appreciation. It comes from a history of experiencing satisfaction from an active engagement in socially responsible activities.

Chapter

2 Cooperation: A Critical Skill

Tension between the impulse to act cooperatively and the impulse to act individually always exists. A recent sports section column debated whether the Most Valuable Player award should go to a player who had the highest individual productivity or to one who most helped the team. Parents debate whether their limited resources should be spent on a new bicycle for one of their children, or for a VCR, that the whole family can use. A racer at the Tour de France complains that his teammates didn't help him enough to win the race. A married couple stays home instead of going out because they can't agree on a movie to see.

We're enjoined not to give in to the group when principles are involved and not to hold the group back to satisfy our own personal whim. We're told not to be selfish, but not to be too self-sacrificing. We tell children to "share," but we punish them if they give their toys away.

Some people have more trouble with this tension than others. Everyone feels it occasionally, especially in our society, which venerates individuality at the same time it depends on cooperation to get things done.

Great confusion occurs at every level. Should we cooperate with our people against "them"? Or should we get our people together in order to cooperate with "them"? "Them" can be the family next door, another company, another ethnic group, another nation. Do I take care of me? Or do we seek together a better way to take care of "us"?

The continuing paradox between promoting the interests of the collective or promoting the interests of the individual arises both in small, everyday interactions at home and work and on a national and worldwide scale in the supportive or adversarial ways in which nations deal with each other.

Children are caught in the dilemma, as is everyone else. This is a universal human problem, as the following examples illustrate:

- An inner-city child who shows promise is encouraged by her teacher to exercise the required individual effort for success, but her friends apply pressure to engage in delinquent, drug-related group activities that provide a sense of belonging.
- A teacher in a school with a large minority student population is aware of the covert prejudice of several colleagues. He is counseled by his administrator to maintain group cohesion by keeping his observations to himself.
- A third grader who is far behind the class in reading refuses to practice with a classmate, believing to accept help is a sign he's incapable of doing it himself.
- A junior high student is suspended from school and grounded at home because she won't tell the school authorities it was one of her friends who committed an infraction.
- A teacher in a team-taught core program persistently insists on doing things her way, making the cooperative effort a frustrating struggle for the others.

Cooperation and Individual Expression: Two Fundamental Motives

The need for affiliation and the need for self-expression tug at people in different ways at different times. Children and adults are caught in the conflict between these two fundamental motives. Children's behavior often seems erratic and inconsistent as they sometimes lean one way, sometimes the other.

Cooperative behavior is learned; no one is born knowing the skills of cooperation. What children are born with is a need for affiliation, a sort of human instinct requiring expression through interpersonal behavior. One important form of affiliation is cooperation. It is an "invention" that allows children to combine two capacities: their social instincts and their ability to imagine future possibilities.

Cooperation is just about the best method that humans have evolved to maximize satisfaction and success in both areas. Group behavior that satisfies affiliation needs and realizes concrete goals is called cooperation.

In subsequent chapters, where self-esteem is discussed, you will find the term *Sense of Connectiveness.* Connectiveness is the set of feelings within children that reflects the way their need for affiliation has been satisfied within their families and later in social relationships. Children with high self-esteem gain satisfaction from the people, places or things to which they feel connected. Children's sense of Connectiveness determines their motivation to act cooperatively which, in turn, influences their capacity for learning and using the skills of cooperation.

Self-expression is an individual characteristic, not a group one. It comes about naturally because everyone is an individual, different from everyone else. All human beings seem to have the need for expressing themselves and to form an identity others can recognize and distinguish. Self-expression contributes to feelings of satisfaction in a person, but these

feelings are different from the Sense of Connectiveness. I have labeled these feelings of satisfaction arising from self-expression the *Sense of Uniqueness,* and they are also an important part of self-esteem.

Even though the tension between expressing oneself and fulfilling one's affiliation needs is ongoing, an important reason exists for teaching cooperative skills to children: Cooperative action, especially when controlled and designed in a school environment, can be an arena for individual expression, whereas individualistic or competitive activities do not satisfy children's need for affiliation.

This assertion will be explored and supported throughout the rest of this book. You will find suggestions for ways to maximize individual expression within cooperative contexts.

Although this book does not focus on individual self-expression, I don't want to give the impression that self-expression is less valuable or important than cooperation. The ability to cooperate broadens one's opportunity for individual expression.

All children, through knowing how to work cooperatively and collaboratively, can extend their opportunities for self-expression; they can use the resources others provide for them; they can test their abilities and ideas in a safe and supportive framework; and they can hone the interpersonal skills underlying success within our complex society.

Interdependence Requires Cooperation

There is another important reason why children need cooperative skills. Interdependence is growing at every level of the ordinary person's daily experience. Traffic problems plague even those who live in formerly rural areas. Workplaces are self-consciously practicing the cooperative, team-oriented busi-

ness tactics that have always given better organizations a competitive edge.

The ability to work with and influence people is critical in finding one's way through the bureaucracies that monitor so many of life's tasks. Collective action is required to control the quality of life in our neighborhoods, from getting rid of drugs to getting the streets paved. Interdependence demands cooperative action, and such action is more effective when people know how to behave cooperatively.

Leadership in everyday issues is provided by those who know how to create cooperative processes and who have the personal qualities to engage others in cooperative efforts. Cooperation in the workplace gives an individual an edge in getting ahead. Cooperation in the neighborhood gives groups of people an edge in exercising influence over the quality of life. Being able to act cooperatively reduces the influence that ideologies and self-serving interests have over social and political actions.

If individuals may be losing the ability to control events, the need for effective collective effort in every walk of life becomes more important. If there is one critical skill that schools absolutely need to teach children, cooperation is rapidly coming to the forefront. Not only is a cooperative classroom a nicer place in which to work and a better place to learn, but cooperation itself is growing in importance in every facet of life.

What Are Cooperative Skills?

We talk about cooperation as if it were a specific skill. We think of cooperativeness as a child's specific attribute. But cooperation is made up of many subsidiary skills and attributes that children must learn as they grow. Children have different com-

binations of strengths and weaknesses among these enabling skills and attributes. This is why they cooperate in different ways, many of which are quite effective.

Many of these attributes can't be taught, but children can be encouraged to express them:

- Sensitivity to the needs of others.
- Ability to listen carefully to what others say.
- Ability to decode complex verbal and written information.
- Enjoyment of close interaction with others.
- Ability to express oneself verbally with accuracy.
- Capacity to imagine a goal and hold the goal's image in mind while proceeding toward it.
- Capacity for understanding and describing one's feelings.
- Patience while others catch up.
- Tolerance for others' differences.
- Demonstrated integrity that elicits trust from others.
- Ability to trust others without excessive anxiety.
- Understanding when help is needed; the courage to give help or ask for it.
- Balance between wanting to please others and wanting personal recognition.
- Balance between wanting to work and wanting to play.
- Confidence in one's own competence to do those things the group requires.
- Ability to motivate others.
- Strong feelings of loyalty and responsibility toward others.

Cooperative Skills and the Family

Children may not learn cooperative skills in their families. In fact they may learn tactics for individual survival that include a strong competitive inclination to ensure they don't lose out in the struggle for insufficient resources, which may include their family's time and attention. The critical mechanism for determining children's cooperativeness or competitiveness when they show up at school is the self-esteem factor I call the Sense of Connectiveness.

When children grow up in families that instill a high Sense of Connectiveness, their capacity for cooperation is high and their ability to get along well with adults and children is evident. Families that do the following things generally produce a high Sense of Connectiveness in children:

- Families communicate well, insist on good communication, and listen to what their children say.
- Families give affection freely.
- Families deal with conflict quickly to preserve the integrity and sense of fairness in family members.
- Parents in such families get along with people and enjoy people's company. Children observe this and participate with their parents in a rich array of social interactions.
- Families make continuing efforts to ensure their children feel safe, are sensitive to events that might frighten children, and guard children against excessive anxieties.
- Values and actions associated with fairness, cooperativeness, sharing, and other social virtues are frequently pointed out, discussed and required of everyone in the family.

Barring events resulting in a deep feeling of loss (deaths, divorces, transiency and financial disasters), children who

have grown up in families such as these will have a broad array of cooperative skills when they come to school. How much they use these skills will be defined by how closely their families have approached the ideal described above.

Children from such families tend to be good communicators, asking questions when necessary and seeking help when appropriate. They smile a lot, and expect others to like them, so they have a low level of anxiety in group situations, even though they may not know other children very well. They make room for others when sitting for stories; they have a natural grace and tact that endears them to everyone.

Children from families who have not created a highly cooperative atmosphere at home show anxiety in various ways. Their behavior is either overly withdrawn or aggressive. The aggressive ones, of course, stand out quickly. The withdrawn children only attract attention from the most sensitive teachers. Later, as their withdrawn nature interferes with learning activities, they, too, will stand out.

Such children don't decode complex directives regarding social situations very well. Even the most simple social situations confound them. When the teacher asks everyone to sit on the floor, they don't know where they should sit, although any place would do. These children don't exhibit flexibility in dealing with peers; they behave as if everyone should act the same way toward them. Such children want everyone to like them so badly, they get angry if people don't like them. They are easily distracted and pay more attention to what other children are doing than to the teacher or the work.

Children's cooperativeness at school begins to differentiate them quickly; good or bad reputations begin quite early. If a teacher is blessed with a classroom of children with strong cooperative attributes, goodwill rather than control characterizes the classroom climate. In classrooms where many children don't have such skills, control becomes the teacher's chief goal,

unless there is a program to teach children the skills of cooperation within a warm and affectionate context.

Teachers will either make use of the positive skills in cooperation children bring to school, or must compensate for the absence of such skills. If children are to be even marginally successful during their school careers, they need to learn those skills as soon as possible. Intelligence doesn't begin to differentiate children in the early grades. Rather, their ability to benefit from group learning situations, the kind they face immediately in kindergarten, is more important.

Building an Atmosphere of Trust

Cooperative effort usually involves giving some control or influence over one's own success to others. Children without a high degree of trust won't be able to work with others easily. Their need for control will be stronger than their need for affiliation. Children who feel connected to people and things outside themselves can balance their needs for control and affiliation more amicably.

Building trust is necessary to build cooperation. Many children will be reluctant to practice cooperative behavior until they feel safe enough to trust the adults and children with whom they work. Children's ability to trust and their capacity to make accurate judgments about whom to trust are a function of two factors.

One factor is, of course, the family life described in the previous section. The other is the degree to which the classroom itself is an arena in which promises are kept and children experience affection and warmth. Even skills learned at home won't prosper if children don't feel safe in the classroom.

Learning and using cooperative skills is similar to learning anything else in school. Children learn more when they feel

safe and satisfied. They get "dumber" in threatening contexts and even children with strong cooperative instincts will either withdraw or begin to act aggressively when their anxiety levels become too high. It's not enough to depend on good family life to provide schools with cooperative children. Schools must support the children through the trust building and affectional practices that inspire cooperativeness.

This directly points out the weakness in teaching cooperative skills only through structured activities. Doing so without an environment in which all children feel safe, valued and comfortable has a limited effect. In fact the only children who are likely to benefit from such practices are those who already have high-level cooperative abilities reflecting their higher overall self-esteem.

Children who have a low level of trust will not benefit from learning about cooperation. They need to experience an atmosphere in the classroom and school in which their level of trust can grow. I make this distinction between *activities* that build cooperation and an *atmosphere* that builds trust because I have observed one without the other in many classrooms. In the following chapters this distinction will be explored in greater depth, and ways to overcome children's mistrust, even if it is rooted in dysfunctional family life, will be provided.

Since cooperation is a skill, it must be learned. Principles of good teaching and effective learning are as relevant in this regard as in learning to read, to write or anything else. But because learning cooperative skills is so sensitive to the emotional life of children, the way in which their emotions are affected by the classroom and school environment is especially critical.

The Role of Friendship in Cooperation

The matter of friendship has important consequences for all children. Affiliation needs are satisfied, to a large extent, through friends throughout one's life. Having friends and knowing how to make and keep them are important to both children's and adult's sense of well-being. The connection between friendship and cooperation is also important.

Watching children play together and listening to their communications when adults aren't controlling them is instructive. One finds the level of cooperation is very high, and the ways children resolve disputes and fulfill mutual responsibilities is often exemplary.

Friendships are social constructs in which cooperative behavior is taken for granted. Friendship requires people to act cooperatively and to learn how to do it well, preserving valued relationships as well as reaching important objectives. One of the characteristics of active friendships is the variety of things friends do together.

There are two dimensions to ongoing relationships, including friendships relevant to this discussion: the breadth of the relationship, i.e., the number of different ways in which members of a group interact; and the depth of the relationship, i.e., the emotional intensity characterizing the interactions within the group.

Strong friendships have both breadth and depth. Friends do a variety of different things together and their emotional investment in each other is significant. It is interesting to note that research into the effect of cooperative activities in learning has found similar characteristics in classrooms in which cooperation is practiced. That is, children do more things together and they like each other more. Studies of multicultural classrooms in which cooperative teaching strategies are used show

that children who engage with each other along a broad front of activities not only like each other more, but also learn more from each other.

When we talk about classrooms being friendly places, we often mean that teachers and children get along well and that the level of conflict among the children is low and quickly resolved when it appears. In this book, the classroom as a "friendly" place will mean that friendship is an important quality in such classrooms, that friendships brought to the classroom are respected, and that there is an active intention to spawn friendships within the classroom that engage and involve everyone.

It's true, you can't *make* people like each other. But increasing the variety of ways in which children interact with each other in schools and classrooms is more likely to result in mutual affection than not. It is more likely to enable children to learn the specific skills of cooperation more easily.

Helpfulness and Friendship

It should be no surprise to anyone that children, like adults, are highly motivated to spend time with their friends and to help each other. Helpfulness is a token of friendship, important as symbolic behavior, as well as being instrumental in assisting friends to reach commonly held goals. People learn much from friends, as those who rail against the influences of the streets on inner-city youth constantly remind us. It seems this motive could be more creatively employed to help children in school. Some teachers, of course, are already doing so.

But expanding opportunities for helpfulness and friendship only make sense within a learning environment that's strongly oriented toward cooperative learning methods. Children need the ability to be helpful in ways that make sense to them, not

only in ways that make sense to adults. They must be able to do positive things with friends, so they do not have to do negative things to fulfill their need for affiliation and affection.

Children in whom the need for affiliation has been well met and consistently supported by loving families and stable neighborhoods can temporarily set aside the obligations of friendship more easily than children who don't have such support. The latter hold on to each other inside the classroom as well as outside; their connection to each other is more important than anything else.

Encouraging helpfulness in children within the classroom and school is important. Helpfulness requires a range of skills, motivations, perceptions and behaviors that become lifelong strengths, with implications for employment opportunities as well as success in social and family life. Furthermore, helpfulness is one of the cardinal virtues associated with developing a sense of social responsibility in children.

To encourage helpfulness in children in the classroom, the range of opportunities must be wide enough to enable more children to engage in helpfulness more frequently. Competitive and individualistic teaching methods tend to circumscribe such opportunities; cooperative teaching methods tend to expand them.

To the extent that teachers become the adversaries of friendship relations because they interfere with individualistic or competitive learning methods (e.g., it's "cheating" if you give answers to or help the competition in any way), the teachers become enemies to the friendship group as a whole. Tension and conflict in relations between teachers and children are often attributed to this. Later, I will explore ways in which teachers can support and expand friendship networks in classrooms, using the affiliation impulse as a positive learning tactic.

Helpfulness is a positive virtue to encourage in children in

school. It not only has many benefits for the children, it also brings about a positive learning environment for everyone. If schools can become safe havens for children, places in which mutual aid and affectionate support are available, helpfulness can be stimulated and possibly instilled as an important part of children's personal value systems.

When classrooms are devoted to individual effort requiring quiet attention to task or competitive teaching tactics requiring some degree of alienation and self-protection, helpfulness becomes less relevant as a value and may even be seen as interfering in the teaching process. But there is a danger in limiting the definition of helpfulness.

When teachers insist that children can be most helpful by being quiet, doing their work and not making a disturbance, the notion of helpfulness is defined by adults' values, not children's. While order must be maintained, and order is part of developing a sense of social responsibility, children's need for affiliation requires the opportunity to be helpful. Children can't develop friendships, prove their worth or rise in the school's social status system unless they can show their loyalty, support, dedication and helpfulness to their peers.

The connection between helpfulness and friendship is complex and dynamic. It's difficult to think about how to organize programs in order to expand these qualities. They are natural and spontaneous events inside and outside the classroom. You can't design friendships and impose them on children. You can't make children be helpful in the ways you want and not be helpful in the ways you don't want. It's too complicated to control. But you can encourage and allow children to use the skills and attitudes they already have in the service of these qualities within a cooperative classroom and school environment. Only a cooperative environment permits such development; this is why cooperative learning strategies have more power to influence in positive ways.

Teachers have a way to deal with the complexities of interpersonal relations through manipulating the cooperative learning climate and vice versa. Children's need for affiliation, their capacity for cooperative behavior forged in play, and their wish to have friends can all work together to create better learning environments.

Cooperation is a convenient label to give to this effort. Cooperative learning is already part of the lexicon of most educators, and most teachers know the advantages of a cooperative work climate from their own experience. The ingredients are available to produce school and classroom climates that enhance children's cooperative skills while satisfying their basic social needs.

The apparent complexities of teaching about cooperation, setting up cooperative climates, and dealing with individual variations in cooperativeness in children become clearer when considered from the perspective of children's self-esteem. The Four Conditions of Self-Esteem will be described in the next chapter. You will see how children's internal dynamics and the external influences on self-esteem result in many of the issues you observe when dealing with cooperation in your classroom.

Chapter

3 The Four Conditions of Self-Esteem: A Model

Before proceeding with the analysis of the connection between cooperation and self-esteem, it is important to give a general overview of self-esteem.

The Four Conditions of Self-Esteem is a distinctive approach to enhancing children's self-esteem. Knowing the general outline of this model will help you to have a broad understanding of the way cooperation and self-esteem are related.

This chapter will show how children's feelings result in specific behavior, and how influences in the classroom or school climate affect the way children feel. It will show you how to increase children's adaptation to cooperative learning methods, and why some children like them and others don't. Chapter 4 will then show how specific self-esteem principles apply to implementing cooperative methods.

General Self-Esteem Principles

There are a few basic assumptions we make in this book when we talk about self-esteem.

- Self-esteem is about feelings. It is basically unconscious and not reportable.
- Self-esteem is about feeling *satisfied.* When basic needs are fulfilled, one feels satisfied. Self-esteem work is about understanding basic emotional needs, how they are expressed in school and how teachers can meet them and ensure that children are learning what they're supposed to.
- Self-esteem has an internal aspect—the set of feelings that children have inside themselves that influence how they respond to their experiences—and an external aspect—the factors in the environment that influence how children feel.
- The transactions between what is going on inside children and what is happening in their environment will determine how each child acts. This creates tremendous variation in how children respond to the same experience.
- Children with high self-esteem respond differently to their environment (external factors) because their internal factors (their feelings) are different from those of children with low self-esteem.
- Children's self-esteem varies during the day and over longer periods of time based on developmental issues as well as persistent influences of their environment. This means that high self-esteem children can have their esteem lowered (even permanently) if things are persistently going badly in the environment. It also means you can raise children's self-esteem if the environment is arranged to consistently have a positive effect on children's feelings.
- It is important to distinguish self-esteem from self-

concept so teachers don't have unrealistic expectations of changes in children's feelings or behavior that may undermine self-esteem rather than raise it.

- Patterns of behavior are more important than specific behaviors in understanding children's self-esteem.
- Self-esteem influences learning through the way in which children experience satisfaction from learning activities.
- Self-esteem influences social relationships, since children with low self-esteem depend on others for emotional support more than children with high self-esteem do.
- Self-esteem influences creativity through the degree of comfort children have in expressing their internal processes of imagination, fantasy and imagery.
- And, finally, self-esteem is a complex phenomenon, composed of relatively independent sub-factors that result in teachers needing to understand why different interventions work for some children but not for others.

The Four Conditions of Self-Esteem

The Four Conditions of Self-Esteem is the name given to four feelings that everyone experiences. These are the *Sense of Connectiveness,* the *Sense of Uniqueness,* the *Sense of Power* and the *Sense of Models.*

We use the term *Sense of* to acknowledge that these feelings are often generalized, pervasive, subtle and even unconscious. Feelings don't quite fit into the lexicon of emotions that our language provides. Feelings are usually rich, complex and hard to label. Each of the Four Conditions of Self-Esteem is composed of many issues.

Children with high self-esteem feel each of these conditions frequently, in many different circumstances and with a high degree of intensity. Children with low self-esteem have difficulty feeling one or more of these conditions. They don't feel it very often, when and where they feel it is quite limited, or they don't feel it very intensely.

In a manner of speaking, feeling "bad" is the absence of a significant experience of one or more of these conditions. Persistently feeling bad is a sign of low self-esteem.

Raising self-esteem means that we help children feel these conditions more often and more intensely, until they are able to feel them without us doing something to them.

While these four conditions are feelings that children already have (internal factors), external factors can also influence feelings. You can design classroom experiences that affect specific conditions in children, and by doing so can control the emotional climate in your classroom more precisely.

The following material will serve as a brief overview of the four conditions.

The Sense of Connectiveness

The Sense of Connectiveness is the self-esteem condition that is central to understanding children's response to cooperative teaching methods. Children with high Connectiveness seem to have an instinct for cooperation that low Connectiveness children don't. But since each condition of self-esteem can be enhanced through appropriate interventions, children's overall ability to cooperate can be raised by building their Sense of Connectiveness.

In order to have high self-esteem, children must be able to gain satisfaction from the people, places and things that they feel connected to, and the value of those connections must be acknowledged by the people who are important to them.

Children with a high Sense of Connectiveness:

- Feel they are a part of something.
- Feel related in important ways to specific people, places or things.
- Identify with a group of people.
- Feel connected to a past or heritage.
- Feel that something important belongs to them (feel a sense of ownership).
- Feel they belong to something or someone.
- Feel good about the things that they feel part of (feel satisfied).
- Know the people or things they feel connected to are thought well of by others.
- Feel they are important to others.
- Feel comfortable with their bodies and trust them to work well (feel connected to themselves).

Children's overall self-esteem is enhanced when their Sense of Connectiveness is enhanced. This happens when the following conditions are met in the children's environment:

- They have a large number of important connections with people, places and things they value (e.g., friends, family, toys and books, "special" places around the home or neighborhood).
- They experience a significant degree of satisfaction from their connections (i.e., they experience love, goodwill, fun, joy, safety or excitement from their connections more often than negative feelings).
- The people and things children feel connected to are acknowledged as valuable by other people.

The Sense of Uniqueness

One of the challenges of teaching is helping children balance adaptation to groups with their need for individual self-expression. Understanding the Sense of Uniqueness becomes especially important when creating a climate for cooperation in your classroom. Enhancing children's Sense of Uniqueness is *not* contrary to helping them become more cooperative.

In order to have high self-esteem, children must acknowledge and respect the qualities and characteristics about themselves that are special and different, and they must receive confirmation from other people that those qualities and characteristics are important and good.

Children with a high Sense of Uniqueness:

- Feel there is something special about themselves.
- Feel they know things or can do things that no one else knows or can do.
- Know that other people think they are special.
- Are able to express themselves in their own unique way.
- Feel creative and imaginative and have opportunities to safely express their creativity.
- Feel respect for themselves.
- Are able to enjoy feeling different or unusual.
- Feel they are being affirmed for what they *are* rather than being judged for what they are not.

Children's overall self-esteem is enhanced when their Sense of Uniqueness is enhanced. This happens when one or more of the following things occur:

- Children are helped to understand what makes them special (e.g., personal characteristics, skills, affiliations, achievements).

- They are given a wide variety of opportunities to express themselves through a variety of methods, (e.g., writing, speaking, drawing, dancing). The greater the variety, the more likely children will find a satisfying avenue for self-expression.
- They are praised for the things they value about themselves, not only the things adults value about them (e.g., a child may feel that athleticism is more important than intellect, even if the child is at the top of the class academically).
- They are not shamed for characteristics over which they have little or no control (e.g., size, looks, ethnicity, gender, their family's lack of affluence).
- They are helped to see that a combination of characteristics makes them special and different (e.g., just being a girl isn't special, just being big isn't special, and being a catcher is only a little special—but being a girl catcher on a little league team, big enough to stop runners is *really* special).
- The environment provides positive recognition for a broad array of personal attributes, not simply a narrow range of accomplishments (e.g., children are affirmed for not only high grades, athletic prowess or money earned but for being honest, forthright or persistent).

The Sense of Models

The Sense of Models is important for understanding why children have different values about cooperation, values that arise from their family experience. Understanding how the Sense of Models can be enhanced can give you new tools for helping children learn to cooperate, even when their background and experience do not support cooperative behavior.

In order to have high self-esteem, children must be able to refer to human, philosophical and operational models to help them make sense of the world. They use these reference points to help them set their own goals, values, personal standards and ideals.

Children with a high Sense of Models:

- Know people they feel are worthy of being emulated.
- Feel confident they can tell right from wrong and good from bad.
- Have consistent values and beliefs guiding and directing their actions in different situations.
- Can depend on prior experiences to help them avoid being intimidated by new ones.
- Feel a sense of purpose and know, more or less, where they're headed.
- Are able to make sense of what's going on in their lives and of the circumstances in which they find themselves.
- Know the standards that are being used to judge them, and have a sense of their own standards.
- Know how to go about learning what they need to know.
- Have a sense of order that enables them to organize their environment in order to accomplish their tasks.
- Experience satisfaction from intellectual activity itself, regardless of content.

Children's overall self-esteem is enhanced when their Sense of Models is enhanced. This happens when the following conditions are met:

- Children have adequate ***human models*** in their lives. Human models are people whom children elect to

emulate. If, by mimicking or emulating these models, children are successful in the things they must do, then the human models are *adequate*. These human models may be literary, mythical or historical figures, as well as real people in children's experience.

- Children have adequate *philosophical models* in their lives. Philosophical models are the sets of ideas and beliefs that guide and influence children's behavior. To the extent that these models help children be successful in what they must do, they are *adequate* models. Ethical and moral principles that children hear being espoused and see being practiced influence the way they make choices and decisions about ethical matters.
- Children have adequate *operational models* in their lives. Operational models are the array of mental constructs that consciously and unconsciously influence children's actions and performance. Good manners, social skills, and the whole array of normative, age-appropriate skills from tying shoes to flushing toilets fall into the category of operational models—things we learn to do without thinking about them. These models are learned and reinforced through children's experiences; they are learned through repetitive behavior. To the extent that children have a broad array of such models, they are helped to think clearly, act purposefully and be successful in what they have to do.

The Sense of Power

Children's Sense of Power is fundamental to their ability to learn efficiently and effectively. This condition of self-esteem is especially important in understanding children's particular responses to competitive teaching methods, as well as to

enhancing their overall ability to accept challenges and take risks in learning.

In order to have high self-esteem, children need to have the competence they need to do what they must, the resources required to effectively express their competence, and the opportunity to use their competence to influence important circumstances of their lives.

Children with a high Sense of Power:

- Believe they can do what they set out to do.
- Feel confident they can handle, one way or another, what is put before them to do, including things that might be risky or challenging.
- Know they can get what they need to do what they have to do.
- Feel they are in charge of their own lives, overall, despite having to depend on others some of the time.
- Feel comfortable when they have a responsibility to fulfill.
- Feel others can't make them do things that they really don't want to do.
- Feel confident they can make the decisions they need to in order to solve the problems they're faced with.
- Know they're not going to lose control of themselves despite pressures they may experience.
- Are able to use the skills they have in situations calling for them, and are comfortable about acquiring new skills.

Children's overall self-esteem is enhanced when their Sense of Power is enhanced. This happens under the following conditions:

- They are given the resources they need to meet important objectives in their lives (e.g., having even a small

allowance allows children to make some important decisions).

- They are given many ways to exercise a Sense of Power, from being able to manipulate tools and other material resources (external factors) to controlling their emotions and solving problems (internal factors). The more ways children have to exercise their Sense of Power, the greater their feeling of control.
- They have the opportunity to use what they know and do well. This is the main strategy used to *maintain* the Sense of Power.
- They are allowed to make all the decisions they are capable of making successfully, even if they resist doing so. This is the main strategy used to *build* the Sense of Power.
- They have a sense of physical and emotional safety.

The more competences that children have and the more skillful they are at using them, the more confident they can be in meeting new challenges (e.g., children who know how to ride the bus and deal with strangers can profit from greater mobility). Children who have an adequate Sense of Power have less need to control or manipulate others. Bullying, acting manipulative, avoiding challenges, being irresponsible and having disabling fears are all signs of a diminished Sense of Power.

The Three Arenas of Self-Esteem

There is another piece of the self-esteem puzzle you need to have. Children experience self-esteem in three arenas: the Personal Arena, the Interpersonal Arena, and the Group Arena.

Children experience their internal states—their feelings—in the Personal Arena. These internal feelings are unique combinations of the Four Conditions of Self-Esteem—Connectiveness, Uniqueness, Power and Models.

Children experience two kinds of external events that influence the way they feel. One kind of external event—direct one-to-one interaction—is called the Interpersonal Arena. There is another person at the other end of the children's one-to-one relationships. In your classroom, the most important person is you.

The other external event is more general—experiences of group interaction occurring in classrooms, families, schools and other group and institutional settings. This is called the Group Arena. Group interactions are more than a collection of one-to-one relationships. In classrooms, group interactions include factors such as classroom climate, lessons and the variety of structured group activities that occur, as well as informal play, instruction and social groups.

Since cooperation is the central group experience with which this book is concerned, the Group Arena is of the utmost importance. Understanding the dynamics of the Group Arena will help you create cooperative experiences that work for all the children in your classroom and school.

Understanding self-esteem in terms of these three arenas is key to effectively increasing self-esteem in the classroom.

The Personal Arena

We infer children's feelings from their behavior. Thus, in the Personal Arena we focus on observing children and analyzing, from their behavior, what their particular self-esteem strengths and weaknesses are. This is important to do in order to select appropriate self-esteem–building activities that will make a difference to an individual child or group of children.

Children who have low self-esteem behave differently from children who have high self-esteem. Some of the behavior is clear and obvious; some is subtle and requires persistent observation to see.

The behavior that expresses children's self-esteem is *patterned behavior.* There are characteristic patterned behaviors that represent highs and lows in each of the four conditions.

When children have low self-esteem, the problem usually centers on one of the four conditions. This condition is the *critical condition.* It must be handled in precise ways in order to achieve significant and persistent behavioral changes in the direction of higher self-esteem.

Appendix B contains a Personal Arena Behavior Checklist for each of the four conditions. These checklists will help you identify and understand behavior associated with each condition. You can use the checklists to help you determine which condition is a child's critical condition. The larger the number of index behaviors observed, and the greater the frequency or intensity of the behaviors, the greater the difficulty the child has with that particular condition of self-esteem.

The Interpersonal Arena

The Interpersonal Arena is the arena where you communicate with a child one-to-one, using the approaches that work best with children who have weaknesses in each of the four conditions.

What you say, how you say it, and when you say it has a powerful effect on children's self-esteem. Children with low self-esteem are much more sensitive to how they are treated than children with higher self-esteem. Children with low self-esteem react differently to their environment than children with higher self-esteem; they make different presumptions about the meaning of what you are doing or saying to them.

Each of the four conditions represents a different set of feelings. For example, children with a strong Sense of Connectiveness generally are more open, friendly, warm, trusting and convivial. Children with a poor Sense of Connectiveness will be shy, overly aggressive, poor communicators, distant and reluctant to respond fully to others. If you are trying to "connect" with these children, you will have to employ different tactics.

The key to making self-esteem interventions work with individual children is this: Strategies that enhance one condition of self-esteem do not necessarily work to enhance the others. You treat a child who has a low Sense of Connectiveness differently than you do one who has a low Sense of Power, if you wish to make a difference in how the child feels.

Just as the behavior that represents a weakness in each Condition of self-esteem is patterned, there are special patterns of interaction that have different effects on children. The Interpersonal Arena offers a wide variety of things you can do to affect each condition. This is the arena where you have the most power to influence the self-esteem of individual children.

Teachers who are skillful at enhancing self-esteem in children are highly flexible in selecting ways to act with different children, depending on an individual child's special emotional needs. The four conditions model for self-esteem shows you how to assess what a child needs (Personal Arena) and how to select techniques that have a powerful influence on children's feelings (Interpersonal Arena).

Appendix C contains a list of techniques and strategies for building each condition of self-esteem in the Interpersonal Arena.

The Group Arena

Most of children's school experience occurs in group situations. By group situation, we mean any time two or more individuals

are engaged in an activity having a common objective for all of them. The group can be a small reading group of three or four children, a classroom, or an entire school.

The term *Group Arena* is used to mean anything influencing self-esteem that results from children's experience in any social system in which they participate. School experience is composed of many social systems through which every child must pass. Some pass through them comfortably, others with little or no satisfaction. All cooperative activities occur in the Group Arena.

The Group Arena is where rules, procedures, norms, policies and other activities occurring in groups influence children's self-esteem. The activities taking place in your classroom influence the self-esteem of everyone in it, including yourself.

Certain things that go on in groups characteristically undermine or enhance the self-esteem of their members. If you understand how different group activities affect self-esteem, you can design activities that enhance self-esteem for all children in your class.

Classroom activities have a different effect on each of the four conditions, and different children have different self-esteem needs. An activity designed to raise children's Sense of Power may not have a significant effect on the Sense of Uniqueness. So a child with a poor Sense of Uniqueness may not benefit significantly from that activity.

Every teacher tends to emphasize some conditions of self-esteem more than others. Which ones are emphasized reflect the teacher's self-esteem, as well as important norms or values in the school.

For example, if you are a teacher who has a high Sense of Connectiveness (many teachers have high Connectiveness), you gain a good deal of satisfaction from interacting with others. You like to interact both frequently and intensively with children in your classroom because of this. As a result, you use

classroom activities to increase the frequency and intensity with which children interact, because it gives you satisfaction to do so.

If you also have a low Sense of Power you will tend to do fewer things that increase children's Sense of Power, and you will find some children who are immune to your warm, loving nature.

When children have problems with one or more of the conditions, they respond favorably to activities that raise those conditions. If you design activities so that all aspects of self-esteem are attended to, all children will find opportunities in your classroom to experience a high level of satisfaction, and their self-esteem will improve if it needs to.

The same principles applying to the Group Arena in the classroom apply to the school as a whole.

Appendix D contains a list of techniques and strategies for building each condition of self-esteem in the Group Arena.

Review

There are four conditions of self-esteem:

- The Sense of Connectiveness
- The Sense of Uniqueness
- The Sense of Models
- The Sense of Power

There are three arenas in which we work with self-esteem issues:

- The Personal Arena
- The Interpersonal Arena
- The Group Arena

Combining the conditions and arenas will help us answer the following questions:

Conditions and Arenas

Condition	***Personal Arena***	***Interpersonal Arena***	***Group Arena***
Connectiveness	What does the child do that shows an ability to relate to people, places and things?	What can I do to improve the child's ability to relate more effectively and comfortably?	What can be done to improve the group's ability to have good relationships?
Uniqueness	How does the child show respect for his or her special characteristics?	What can I do to improve the child's self-image and self-respect?	What can be done to increase the group's capacity for creative self-expression?
Power	How does the child show control over his or her life and work?	What can I do to improve the child's skill, sense of responsibility and confidence?	What can be done to improve the group's ability to self-monitor and make good decisions?
Models	How does the child show the sense of order and purpose he or she feels in life?	What can I do to improve the child's understanding and ability to learn?	What can be done to set standards and expectations for the group to achieve?

Chapter

4 Self-Esteem in the Cooperative Classroom

All the conditions of self-esteem operate in most of the events of children's lives. Children are whole people, bringing everything they are to each experience. But because each self-esteem condition influences and is influenced by different circumstances, most experiences are affected more by some conditions than others.

Cooperation and social responsibility bring all the issues of children's self-esteem into play, but for most children the Sense of Connectiveness is more critical to cooperation issues than the other conditions. The Sense of Connectiveness is the condition we will consider most fully in this chapter, although I will also show how the other conditions, especially the Sense of Power, affect children's ability to cooperate and act responsibly.

Cooperation and the Sense of Connectiveness

Although all children will benefit from a classroom environment that meets their need for affiliation, children with a low Sense of Connectiveness have the greatest need for an environment that nurtures their feelings of affiliation. Paradoxically, these children also are most likely to have difficulty coping with cooperative activities and social responsibility because they lack the requisite skills. These children lack an instinctive and spontaneous sense of how to function comfortably with people.

This situation often confounds teachers. Those children with the greatest need for nurturing, affection, attention and connection are the most difficult to relate to.

By the time a child arrives at school, the Sense of Connectiveness has been fairly well formed by the child's life experiences. The older the child becomes, the more difficult it becomes to change the Sense of Connectiveness, since the feelings associated with it become embedded in the child's sense of self.

Shy or gregarious, outgoing or reticent, proactive or reactive, sociable or loner, enthusiastic or restrained—a number of labels can be applied to denote the level of children's Sense of Connectiveness and how it manifests in their social lives. Children at kindergarten age already have many of the elements of a personal style, but they are still moldable, capable of being significantly influenced by events around them.

The Sense of Connectiveness, like each condition of self-esteem, is a feeling. It is at the heart of the skills children have that enable them to function well in social situations. Connectiveness provides the motivation to use social skills, and influences the degree of satisfaction children achieve from using these skills. A child with a low Sense of Connectiveness

can learn certain skills needed in cooperative learning tasks, but is unlikely to be comfortable using them, will not spontaneously seek out tasks requiring them and will easily retreat from using the skills if anxiety becomes excessive within the social situation of cooperative activities.

Cooperative learning activities will be a source of stress and discomfort for low Connectiveness children, not a basis for deep satisfaction. Children with higher Connectiveness will often feel uncomfortable around such children and will tend to engage with other high Connectiveness peers, unwittingly isolating the low Connectiveness children. Similarly, teachers also find low Connectiveness children hard to "warm up to."

Learning cooperative skills is the final step, so to speak, in the progress of children's Sense of Connectiveness. Children with a low Sense of Connectiveness may be required to learn these skills, but the skills won't "stick" they way they do with high Connectiveness children.

Special Needs of Low Connectiveness Children

Low Connectiveness children need something more in a classroom devoted to cooperative learning methods where social responsibility is emphasized. They need many of the things done for them that appear in the Interpersonal Arena Techniques list in Appendix C, and will progress more slowly in interpersonal situations than their high Connectiveness peers.

Many low Connectiveness children are mistrustful. This tendency operates in many ways to keep them from developing more sociable styles. For example, when a promise is made to a low Connectiveness child, the child may become a pest and persistently check whether the promise will be kept. If the child considers it a "promise" that the class will go on a field trip (something desirable), the child will badger the teacher with questions about the promised trip until the teacher loses pa-

tience and threatens to punish the child if the badgering keeps up. Such children do not seem to have the ability to defer gratification, especially when a promise is involved. This creates a climate of criticism and rejection by adults and peers, since the pettiness of such a child wears people down.

Low Connectiveness children have a strong tendency to focus on the interpersonal connections in a group situation, rather than on the group's task. In a reading group, for example, the low Connectiveness child will be watching others for signs of like or dislike, acceptance or rejection and other subtle interpersonal factors. When the child sees such signs (this always happens!) the signs will become the focus of attention, not the reading. This is why cooperative learning tactics can be helpful to low Connectiveness children, since the group cooperation satisfies their need for connection at the same time it provides continuous refocusing on the task.

Low Connectiveness children tend to distort interpersonal signals. They often interpret practical suggestions for improving performance as criticism and believe that the person making the suggestions is rejecting them. Many teachers become distanced from these children because every suggestion made becomes the occasion for a scene. It's hard to be "teacherly" toward a child who won't accept instruction.

During cooperative learning activities, this tendency can lead to conflict with other members of the team or group. This is only mitigated by the degree of comfort the low Connectiveness child has with that particular group of children. If the children have interacted in many different ways and the learning team has had consistent membership, then this problem will become less intense.

The low Connectiveness child is likely to be the first to complain about something in a learning team or cooperative teaching situation. The child may complain before anything

has happened, since Low Connectiveness children are so sensitive to the apparent attitudes of others toward them. These children need extra assurance that they are accepted and liked. It's impossible for these children to function with clear intellect until this acceptance is given.

The Range of Connectiveness

There is a range of variability of the Sense of Connectiveness in children. You will notice subtle differences among children related to the strength of their Sense of Connectiveness. Children with very low Connectiveness are usually so withdrawn and behave so inappropriately they stand out clearly.

Children with very high Connectiveness often stand out because they act paradoxically. Since they have little need for constant social reinforcement (they carry a feeling of connection *within* them) they often act *as if* they are loners, not needing to be around others. They move in and out of social situations with ease, since they know they can get what they need from people when they need it. Such confidence in one's social skills is rare, and when we see it in a child it sometimes surprises us.

The middle range of Connectiveness requires more careful attention, since these children may not be overly emotional or consistent. Some days they may function competently in the group, other days they may evidence low Connectiveness behaviors. Watch the pattern. Children who have difficulty with any condition of self-esteem will show problems with that condition when their anxiety level is higher.

Children with problems in Connectiveness, even unsevere ones, will tend to react more to things going on at home, bringing their feelings to school and acting them out there. This is more likely to occur if they feel safer at school than at home. So when low Connectiveness, mistrustful children let you know

how they feel, by acting out their feelings, something you're doing is working, even if the results don't feel very good.

The higher children's Sense of Connectiveness, the more they are spontaneously able to derive satisfaction from group situations. This means children don't need to have high Connectiveness to benefit from cooperative learning activities. Even children with an average Sense of Connectiveness are able to benefit, they just need more structure, predictability and experience in knowing how to handle discomfort when it arises. But a few low Connectiveness children can make you doubt your choice to teach cooperatively, since these children become vortexes for trouble.

Competitiveness and the Sense of Power

Children who are competitive and like competitive situations have a high Sense of Power, relative to their Sense of Connectiveness. High Power children gain satisfaction from being able to express their competence in situations where they can measure the results in practical and objective ways. In brief, they like to be able to do things having a quantitative result and they need to measure this result against a standard in order to know whether they did "good enough." This standard is usually how others have done with respect to the same task.

In social terms, this becomes competitiveness. It's the way high Power children gain satisfaction in social situations. The stronger their Sense of Power is relative to their Sense of Connectiveness, the more likely they will compete "ruthlessly," not caring how the competition feels about losing. They just get a lot of satisfaction from winning.

It's easiest to see this factor at work in games, especially games having a competitive aspect. High Power children are avid in their involvement and investment in the game. They

may even support and encourage their teammates, since they presume this will give them an advantage in winning. They are severe toward the opposition. These children light up and are filled with enthusiasm, energy and good spirits when competing. If adults are caught up in the game, too, they are drawn to these single-minded strivers. Everyone loves a winner!

In classroom activities, high Power children don't have the same opportunities to freely express their competitiveness. But they use competitive and individualistic learning activities as much as possible to prove, once again, they are "good enough." If you call for hands to answer a problem, they're practically out of their seats, and are disappointed when they're not called on. You can often hear them mumbling, "I knew the answer to that!" They will study hard, if that is what they have found will give them an edge. They may employ other strategies, such as cheating, if they feel this is the only way to "win."

Competition shapes these children. They become more focused in competitive situations, and often become a source of pride for teachers who use competitive learning strategies frequently. They seem to have enthusiasm for learning, but it's really enthusiasm for winning. Competitive learning situations mask the difference.

These children have a tendency to make cooperative learning situations into competitive ones. They eagerly suggest that their team can be first, even if being first has no special benefit. They are sensitive to other members of the team not pulling their fair share. High Connectiveness children are likely to help the child who's behind. High Power children are more likely to criticize this same child.

Remember, these children are high Power *relative* to their Sense of Connectiveness, so many of the problems they pose are a function of the low Connectiveness, *not* the high Power. In cooperative learning situations, the goal is to raise their Sense of Connectiveness, not lower their Sense of Power.

The problems high Power children pose are not associated with doing the work, but with maintaining group cohesion, providing help for slower members of the team, and exhibiting higher order social attributes such as empathy, altruism and helpfulness. Even in a group situation, these children unconsciously feel helping another child may give that child an edge.

Since high Power children measure their accomplishment against that of others, when someone else does better, they feel worse. In a team situation, this sort of competitiveness can become directed at teammates, unless the high Power children have been helped to overcome this tendency by having their Sense of Connectiveness raised.

Children with a high Sense of Power tend to be valued in many different ways in classrooms and schools. They are strivers who can become single-minded with respect to tasks. We may wonder why more children can't be like them: hard working and persistent. But to the extent that these children are appealed to through competitive learning situations, more children will automatically be "losers." It's the way competition works.

Even if you can imagine a classroom full of high Power children, sooner or later they will show their differences in success at different tasks, because their abilities are different. Some will come up losers more often, some will come up winners. This group will soon stratify itself, and the situation will return to one in which there are a few winners and many losers in most learning situations. The problem is in the competition, not in the children.

The Role of Uniqueness and Models

The Senses of Uniqueness and Models also play a role in how successful children can be in cooperative learning situations.

But they are more contributory than fundamental to success. Generally, success in cooperative learning depends most on Connectiveness, secondarily on Power and lastly on Uniqueness and Models.

Children with a low Sense of Uniqueness have a poor self-concept, even though their overall self-esteem may be adequate. The simplest way to understand the difference between self-esteem and self-concept is that self-esteem has to do with *feeling* and self-concept has to do with *thinking*. Self-esteem is unconscious, expressive and affects everything a child does, especially when the action has some emotional content. Self-concept, on the other hand, is a cognitive process—conscious beliefs about oneself—that are used to select behavior that will fulfill an idea about what one should or shouldn't be. Children with low Uniqueness benefit from cooperative learning methods because they are able to gain satisfaction from the group situation in ways other than those satisfying the Sense of Uniqueness.

Children with a high Sense of Uniqueness tend to be creative and highly expressive. They like doing things on their own, but function well in groups if their Sense of Connectiveness is adequate. They will seek special roles within a group or learning team, but that is not necessarily a problem if the teams are structured so this can occur. These children like to achieve individual recognition, but can they benefit from the group's success much of the time. They are different, unusual and look at things from novel perspectives. All of this can be an asset to a group rather than a problem.

Children with a low Sense of Models benefit from cooperative learning situations because they tend to lose sight of learning objectives; they become confused and anxious when working alone. Working with a team helps them stay focused and on task. They may be the children in learning teams who seem to receive more help than they give. If learning teams are well

structured, low Models children can benefit much more than when they work alone in individualistic situations. They don't do well in competitive learning situations because they can't keep up.

High models children learn easily, size up situations well and are major contributors to team learning activities. They are the "bright" ones, because they quickly make sense of what's going on and set clear goals and objectives for themselves. In complex situations, such as cooperative learning activities, they enjoy the complexity and are not made anxious by it. If their Senses of Connectiveness and Power are high enough, they will be leaders.

The Difference Between Cooperation and Conformity

Some educators and many non-educators fear that too much emphasis on cooperation will incline children to conformity, subordinating their individuality to the group. This fear comes from being unclear about the distinction between cooperation and conformity.

Cooperation is a way children can achieve task-oriented goals at the same time they realize a high degree of satisfaction because their affiliative needs are being met by the group. Cooperation requires skills and attitudes resulting from higher self-esteem.

Conformity occurs when an individual adopts and subscribes to group norms, standards and expectations solely to fulfill unmet affiliation needs, without reference to tasks the group may perform. People who conform to groups do so in order to belong, not to get something done.

In the classroom, there will always be an inclination to

conformity among children who have self-esteem problems, regardless of whether the teaching style is cooperative, competitive or individualistic. Structured cooperative activities actually diminish the occasion for conformity by requiring a task orientation along with the group affiliation.

To the extent that cooperative learning strategies enhance self-esteem they diminish the sort of conformity that undermines children's Sense of Uniqueness—the self-esteem condition most undermined when conformity is required by any social system.

Classrooms that don't strongly emphasize cooperative learning environments require a higher degree of conformity because children are not allowed to participate in the decisions about how the groups they belong to will work. Another of the strange paradoxes surrounding these issues is that classrooms emphasizing competition tend to demand more conformity to rules and regulations because so many children who lose in competitive activities act out their despair in antisocial ways.

Willingness to abide by group norms one has helped establish is not conformity, but a rational requirement of cooperative action. Individuals do give something up under cooperative methods to a certain extent, but the payoff in learning and personal satisfaction offsets the compromises made.

Compromise is different from conformity; it supposes a person has made a conscious choice to forego some singular freedom in order to benefit from a collective action. Knowing how to compromise in order to meet the various needs within a group is a useful skill in school, life and the world of work.

Cooperative classrooms require children to learn a number of skills that promote group efficacy and cohesion. But if the overall climate for promoting self-esteem is rich, the likelihood of conforming youngsters coming out of the experience is low. When children with high self-esteem see that compromise and group cohesion are to their advantage, they are not conformists.

What About Rewards?

Schools have never solved the problem of how to reward children for exemplary behavior or performance. Most of the disagreement centers around whether children should be given extrinsic rewards as motivation, or whether intrinsic rewards are better.

Sometimes the intrinsic reward proposed is that children should love learning itself. This seems somewhat farfetched, except possibly for children who have a high Sense of Models. These children like to make sense of things and achieve a strong feeling of satisfaction when they do. They are also usually the "smartest" kids, since their inclination to seek meaning and order is quite functional with respect to school tasks.

The percentage of children who have a very high Sense of Models in most classrooms is small, however. And as schools learn to acknowledge and make space for various kinds of intelligence (creative, social, physical, aesthetic and so on), the special advantage high Models children have may diminish, and children who are strong in the other conditions of self-esteem will be recognized on equal footing.

Extrinsic rewards are those that children achieve through some form of measurable performance, even if the measurement is somewhat spurious. Everything from candy to cash payments has been used to motivate or reward children, after the fact. Scholarships, award ceremonies, certificates, ice cream—the list of possible awards is endless.

Many years ago I was doing consulting for the faculty of a junior high school. It was close to the end of the year and, during a break in the workshop, awards to be given out at graduation were discussed.

I noticed the awards all represented values the faculty felt were important. I suggested some award only kids would value

should be made, specifically suggesting "The Most Weird Event Award." The members of the faculty liked the idea, and at graduation the award was given to a young man who had shaved his head at one time during the school year and had come to school bald!

The applause from the students was thunderous. It was an award to which they related because this young man was one of their own. It was an extrinsic award, complete with an inscribed certificate, but it reflected the students' values and meant something different. Since his act was so obviously "weird," there was less envy about the award from students who thought they deserved other awards. This young man was a winner, but there didn't seem to be any losers.

To me, this story has always shown that the distinction between extrinsic and intrinsic rewards or acknowledgments is too simple. There are many factors to consider; self-esteem is one of them.

Children with low self-esteem tend to mistrust their own performance. They set standards they can't readily achieve, reinforcing their low self-esteem. Children with high self-esteem set reasonable and achievable standards for themselves. They don't feel too bad when they are unable to meet their own standards. They presume it was an accident, not a disaster, and something they can correct the next time around.

Many studies of cooperative learning, as well as studies that directly evaluate the effect of rewards, have shown an interesting result: In most instances motivation decreases for children who receive rewards for which they have worked. If you work for a reward and get it, you're finished for the day, so to speak. Conversely, children who don't receive extrinsic rewards tend to maintain motivation and keep at what they were studying and learning after the rewarded kids have stopped. If you think about this, it makes sense.

If a reward is substituted for personal satisfaction as the motivation for working at something, it becomes the end in itself. Most children are practical and concrete. If you tell them they'll get X for doing Y, they do Y to get X. And that's it. They're done!

But if you tell kids to do X until they're satisfied they have done it as well as they can, you present them with a problem. They have to make some decisions, analyze goals, decide how much they need to do and evaluate the results. Because of this, they are much more engaged in what they're doing and are likely to stay with it due to this engagement.

Children with high self-esteem are familiar with doing things in order to gain satisfaction. That's what self-esteem is about. Each of the four conditions represents a different kind of satisfaction arising from different experiences.

In one sense, being able to gain satisfaction from an experience is a skill that arises from repetitive experience. Self-esteem is the ability to gain satisfaction from experiences as a result of having consistently gained satisfaction from those experiences in the past. Children with higher self-esteem are able to work for intrinsic rewards, because they not only know what intrinsic rewards feel like, but are also generally confident they'll achieve these rewards.

Children with low self-esteem aren't as skilled at achieving satisfaction from their own efforts. These children need more concrete and objective feedback (extrinsic rewards) when they've done something well to help them overcome their own disposition to doubt or mistrust that their efforts will produce success and satisfaction. As self-esteem rises, the need for extrinsic rewards as motivators diminishes. The feeling of satisfaction itself becomes the motivator.

The above notwithstanding, you'll no doubt think of a number of children for whom extrinsic rewards are persistent

motivators. Usually, these are children with a high Sense of Power, who seek concrete and objective rewards as a measure of their success in competing with others. Their overall self-esteem may not be high, and they will show deficits in Connectiveness, Uniqueness or Models, but their Sense of Power is firm. The fact they have won these awards in the past reinforces the expectation they'll win them again.

Rewards and competitive learning environments seem to go together. Rewards seem less useful in cooperative learning situations because there is so much in the experience itself for children to value. They are getting affiliation needs met as well as satisfying academic requirements. They may be working with friends. They don't have the anxiety associated with competing. They have more control over their own learning situations since they are monitoring the process as well as mastering the content.

Moreover, in a cooperative atmosphere the boundaries of who does what are permeable. Children may be helping each other in ways that obscure who did how much. The overall goal is to ensure that children will meet the goals for the activity as well as the subject or grade level. When children help each other, share the work, contribute from their own unique skills and find collective satisfaction in cooperative action, it's hard to tell who should win an award. It's also less necessary to have any reward.

Rewards are useful motivators in simple learning situations where quantitative results are expected, such as speed drills. They are more functional in short term efforts (e.g., this period, or today) rather than over the long haul. They work better for kids with a high Sense of Power. They work better for children who have low self-esteem.

Extrinsic awards of performance over time, such as those given at graduation for the year's work in various fields, generally have little or no influence on performance. They are not a

reward so much as an objective acknowledgement of exemplary performance.

Rewards are substitutes for satisfaction derived from the activity itself. As long as rewards are used as motivators, children are less likely to find either the learning itself or the material learned of intrinsic value or interest. The more rewards are used, the less interest children have in the material.

The fact that some children actually do develop intellectual interests has nothing to do with rewards; these children have found, somehow, an intrinsic satisfaction in their studies and enjoy the subject or process for itself. This satisfaction probably would have happened without rewards.

Self-esteem provides another way to look at the meaning and function of extrinsic rewards in learning. When added to the impact of cooperative learning atmospheres, the development of self-esteem becomes more important than providing children with incentives that have little to do with developing an interest in learning.

Making a Difference Through Social Responsibility

The self-esteem factor having most to do with developing a sense of social responsibility is the Sense of Models. The Sense of Connectiveness is also very important, especially when children are first beginning to learn about their responsibilities to others. At the earliest stages of their social growth, the direct connection children have with others promotes the impulse to act in ways that maintain and promote relationships. Children learn to act correctly because they find it makes the people happy who are most important to them.

As children get older and their ability to deal with abstractions and higher order thinking processes grows, they more

readily imagine how certain social values are important in a wider sphere. As their Sense of Models is developed, they seek more meaning and purpose in what they do, so the ideas underlying social behavior, the principles and generalities, become more important. Their ability to foresee and imagine the impact of their behavior on others becomes more refined and useful.

But the basic attribute of social responsibility, the capacity for gaining satisfaction from the direct connection one has with others, remains at the root. A firm Sense of Connectiveness ensures that a sense of social responsibility is not an abstraction removed from children's real experience. As the Senses of Connectiveness and Models expand and grow, children learn to foresee how their own actions can influence people and events distant from themselves. For example, they can understand the plight of less fortunate people (Models) and wish to reduce their suffering (Connectiveness). This is why the development of a cooperative learning atmosphere and the development of social responsibility go hand in hand in schools. Two aspects of self-esteem are promoted at the same time.

To combine these two basic educational intentions, children at every grade level must be engaged in understanding, monitoring and having an influence over the social and behavioral context of the classroom and school. Cooperative learning methods must help children work together, as much as possible, to share the responsibility (with the adults) in maintaining a good school climate. This requires adults to devote time and attention to the activities that allow this to happen.

The Group Arena techniques described in Appendix D for building Connectiveness and Models are the general framework within which this can happen. The more these activities take place in the classroom and school, the more cooperation and social responsibility will be developed.

It is important to remember that the conceptual side of

social responsibility, i.e., the principles, ideas and concepts that guide social interaction, needs to remain connected to the affective side, to sensitivity, empathy, altruism and the impulse to be helpful. This can only occur when the principles and concepts are being espoused in a context which is warm, supportive and nurturing. To the extent schools are places where both occur, they will have a profound impact on many students, irrespective of the social context in which the school exists. Inner city schools and wealthy suburban ones have similar opportunities. The basic emotional needs and structures in children are the same in each setting, and self-esteem development appeals to those basic needs and structures.

Chapter

5 Building a Cooperative Classroom Climate

The concept of climate in the classroom or school doesn't lend itself to objective measurement. There is little agreement on what constitutes it. In this respect, climate is a little like a good loaf of bread. You can't get to what it is by studying its ingredients, because the ingredients don't, individually, sufficiently explain the end product.

Classroom or school climate has flavor, texture and weight, and produces varying degrees of satisfaction in those who experience it. The final result of climate is that it affects children's feelings and, through their feelings, their performance.

What Is Climate?

Climate is perceived through the way people feel, and feelings are hard to specify or label. They tend to be spontaneous and unpredictable, and different people seem to feel different ways under different circumstances. It's difficult to base a science on feelings, but feelings are at the basis of most behavior. Children's performance in school is influenced by

the way they feel; their self-esteem is about the way they feel. When we leave consideration of feelings out of our efforts to understand the connection between teaching practice and student performance, we can't make sense of one or the other.

Classroom or school climate is based on two major factors: what objectively happens to children when they are there, and how children perceive and interpret what is happening to them.

Let's use as an example a common event that is concrete, objective and observable: Sandy pushes Robert out of line at the end of recess. Robert is going to react to this in some way. But his reaction will be determined by his perceptions and interpretations of the push. The following factors may influence his response to the event:

- Who pushed him (friend, foe, neutral associate)?
- What led up to it (fight, game, nothing at all)?
- How did Robert assess the meaning of the push (friendly, spiteful, angry, playful)?
- Did the push conform to some standard? Was it harder than friendly? Softer than angry? How did it feel?
- How did others react to the push? Did being pushed affect Robert's status in the group in any way? What did others expect him to do about it (fight, laugh, push back)?
- What was the overall context for the push? Was it a serious infraction of rules or was it normal and acceptable? Did the teacher notice?
- What are the age, size, gender and classroom status of the children involved? Did this event have moral or status implications? For example, a smaller child of one gender being pushed by a larger child of the other gender has different meanings at different ages.

This one ordinary event is complex and responses to it will vary from time to time and situation to situation. But a child's reaction becomes patterned with respect to the climate within which it occurs. In a classroom or group where there is a high level of mutual support, cooperation, affection, self-control and familiarity, the average response to being pushed out of line will be more benign than in a group in which conflict, competition, badwill, impulsivity and alienation are the norms.

Classroom climate is more than the sum of its parts. It is reflected not only in the events that occur, but in the characteristic way children learn the meaning of those events. It is at this deeper level that children and adults form a feeling one way or another about the group or classroom. When climate is tilted toward one extreme or the other (very positive or very negative) the atmosphere is so palpable that sensitive observers can experience it when walking into a school or classroom.

The following is a list of major ingredients in classroom climate. In every situation, the ingredients will occur in different proportions, resulting in variations in climate.

- Rules, explicit and implicit, that control behavior.
- General standards and expectations for behavior and performance that are flexible and adjusted to different children and circumstances.
- Moral and ethical principles guiding the rules and standards, built into them by the values of the teacher, school, community and parents.
- Activities in the situation and how they affect feelings as well as performance. For example, if children are expected to work, does the work allow them to feel they've accomplished something important? If children are playing, does the activity allow them to feel happy and satisfied?

- Cultural orientation of the community and the families from which children come, especially as their beliefs and values influence children's behavior and performance in the classroom.
- Mood throughout the school as it impinges on the classroom. This has to do with the administrative practices and regulations, as well as the leadership style of administrative personnel.
- Teacher attitudes, teaching style, mood and self-esteem profile, as well as teacher goals and objectives, skill in using different teaching methods, overall command of teaching practices and understanding of children's cognitive and emotional development. This combination of factors is most difficult to study. At the same time it is most influential in the overall climate.

Deciding which of these ingredients is most important in determining the quality of classroom climate puts us right in the middle of the controversy about it. As the teacher, you must be able to control those factors you can influence. These include rules, standards, expectations and you, yourself. The other factors may be influenced by the classroom teacher if the structure of the school and its relationship to the community permit it. That varies from place to place.

Factors That Affect Climate

Designing a climate that emphasizes cooperation and social responsibility means using the above factors in ways that consistently move children to use cooperation and express socially responsible attitudes and behavior. But it also requires that children consistently be able to experience a high level of satisfaction from doing so.

Building a cooperative climate involves using the practices, tactics and strategies that build self-esteem, especially the Senses of Connectiveness and Power. This permits teachers to work on the external factors of climate (rules, standards, expectations and activities) and the internal factors (feelings, attitudes, motivation and fulfilling emotional needs) that enhance children's self-esteem.

Let's look at the factors affecting climate and see how they can be used to influence cooperation and social responsibility.

Rules That Control Behavior

In a cooperative classroom many of the rules will be about human relations. They will be positive rules (thou shall) rather than negative ones. There will be general rules governing individual behavior, and specific rules for behavior in learning groups or teams, e.g., each child will do the work assigned to him or her by the team. Children will be involved in designing and changing the rules consistent with their ages and capabilities, since this is an important area for cooperative behavior.

The way rules are formed and the things rules are designed to influence have an important effect on children's sense of social responsibility. Rules are "real" in the sense that they directly influence behavior through the effect of sanctions. But they are also "symbolic" because the rules reflect the values of the system. The way rules are formed (positive or negative) exemplifies the way children are thought about, i.e., capable of positive self-control or needing external controls.

The rules need to be important. The easiest way to confirm this is to talk about the rules when they are not being broken. This permits the teacher to emphasize the class's responsibility for monitoring its own behavior, rather than focusing on individual infractions. This collective responsibility becomes the foundation for small groups accepting the task of monitoring

their own behavior during learning activities. The following example illustrates this point:

Teacher: "I want to discuss the rules again. May I please have your attention."

Children: (small grumbling as they have to set aside what they're working on)

Teacher: "We have a rule about what to do when a learning team needs help. Can someone tell me what that rule is?"

Child: "When a team needs help, the leader raises her hand and waits until the teacher comes over."

Teacher: "Hmm. Was Sarah correct?"

Children: (much vocal and physical affirmation of Sarah's answer)

Teacher: "Yes, Sarah was absolutely right. I wanted to ask about that rule because I've noticed lately how incredibly good all of you have been in following this rule. The classroom is so pleasant and my job is easier. I want to thank you all for your efforts. You may go back to work now."

Children: (Smiles and mutual congratulations. Sarah looks especially pleased with herself.)

General Standards and Expectations

No social system can have rules covering every contingency and all behavior; no one could remember them all. Instead, general standards and expectations are set out. These are flexible and adjustable to different circumstances. Sometimes they are explicit, sometimes implicit.

An example of such a standard is that noise should be consistent with the type of work that's going on and should not be so loud as to disturb other children. The teacher usually monitors activity, letting the class know when it's exceeding acceptable boundaries. Noisy activities can become *too* noisy,

even though the children may be encouraged to be enthusiastic and uninhibited. The same activity may have a different standard depending on whether it's done inside or outside.

A flexible expectation is that all papers must be readable. Some children have excellent handwriting control, others don't. Most teachers will give slack to a child who is clearly trying, but not doing as well as the others. Sometimes an entire paper might be marginally legible, and the teacher will let it pass to encourage the child.

In a classroom devoted to cooperation and social responsibility, the teacher will attempt to make standards and expectations as clear and explicit as possible. They may be listed on charts as expectations, not rules. (Rules usually carry sanctions, while expectations and standards require behavioral adjustment or correction without sanctions.)

Many standards and expectations will be about relationships and group behavior. The following are a few suggestions:

- Children will help each other whenever appropriate.
- Group work will be done as close to perfect as possible before it's handed in.
- The noise level will be appropriate to the activity.
- Everyone will be treated respectfully.
- Each member of a team will share fairly in the team's work.

In a cooperatively oriented classroom the purpose of clarifying rules and standards is different from a classroom oriented to competitive or individualistic activities. In the latter, behavioral control is a key motive; in the cooperative classroom, moving the locus of control onto the children is the goal. But there is a subtle difference between letting the locus of control be within the individual child and making it a social function of the group.

In the final analysis, individuals should exercise control over their own behavior. In competitive or individualistically oriented classrooms, this means some children can do it better than others. Self-control is an ability that differentiates children relative to their developmental pace, as well as by how their families raise them. Children who are consistently less able to exercise self-control are at a disadvantage and more easily become labeled behavior problems.

In a cooperatively oriented classroom, children can help each other with behavioral control if they know it's something they're expected to do. The more the class as a whole is aware of the standards and expectations—how they're evaluated, and how they can be altered for different circumstances—the more the class itself can help children who have less ability at self-control. Often, as most teachers know, children have more influence on each other's behavior than the teacher does.

Moral and Ethical Principles

Values and beliefs are not standards or rules, but they determine what the standards or rules will be. Values and beliefs are the moral and ethical principles that infuse everything we do. Everyone has them. They are implicit in all the rules, standards and expectations existing in every classroom, even if we don't talk about them. We tend to forget how important they are.

Values and beliefs are important in cooperative classrooms because they affect children's Sense of Models. Even though teachers justify their rules on grounds of practicality and efficiency, rules often reflect the teacher's personal values. This is not to say the rules may not also be practical and efficient! Many children, especially those with a high Sense of Models, want to know why things are the way they are. They feel satisfied when they understand *why* they should abide by rules and expectations. Children with a low Sense of Models need to understand

why in order to raise this condition of self-esteem in themselves.

Children benefit from understanding the values and beliefs behind the rules and regulations they live within. Not the least of these values is that cooperation is a good way for people to get along with each other, quite apart from its effectiveness as a method for accomplishing things. That children should be able to feel safe and comfortable is a deeply held belief, as well as a good method for enhancing learning.

In education, everyone does things because of what they believe, even though there may not be scientific evidence to support what they do. One example has been referred to often in this book—competitive practices are used despite the evidence that they don't work for most children.

When values and beliefs, as well as rules and expectations, are discussed occasionally, children learn principles to guide the decisions they make about their behavior. This is especially important for children without successful experience in cooperative learning classrooms. Clarifying beliefs and values reduces the anxiety some children feel and allows them to make sense of what's happening.

Classroom Activities

What children are doing and how they feel about what they're doing have a powerful influence on the classroom climate.

Classroom activities influence classroom climate by affecting the way children feel. Every activity going on in a classroom affects children's self-esteem in some way. When activities are designed to raise self-esteem, the effect on climate is positive. When activities lower self-esteem, the effect is negative.

Even though the curriculum may be decided by district or state mandates, *how* teachers deliver the curriculum is strongly influenced by their skills and beliefs. A key factor in this is the

accuracy with which the self-esteem needs of children in a classroom are assessed.

Let me give you an example: A classroom may have a large percentage of children who have a low Sense of Power. This is often the case in classrooms greatly affected by children who have learning problems, histories of school difficulties, families who don't place high value on education, dysfunctional families or live in institutional settings, such as group or foster homes. If learning activities are oriented toward competitive or individualistic methods, these children will feel unsuccessful relative to their higher ability peers. This disadvantage will be turned into low motivation, distractibility, anger and disruptive behavior. The climate in such a classroom is likely to be problematic.

Note that the way the activities are constructed can undermine the classroom climate, as well as the feelings of the children. In a classroom devoted to cooperation, however, the activities are likely to meet more children's self-esteem needs, and the climate will be affected positively.

When a cooperative climate has been firmly established in a classroom through the many different ways we've discussed, it's more likely that children's engagement will be greater and more satisfaction will result from any activity the teacher uses.

Children's Backgrounds

By the time children start school, they have been socialized into their families' culture. This culture includes the ideas, beliefs, values and rules every family has by which children are affected, for good or ill. What the children have learned at home is going to help them be successful or unsuccessful at school.

In a cooperatively inclined classroom, the attributes leading to success have much to do with children's social skills and attitudes. Do the children like and get along with people? Are

they kind and considerate? Are they easy to like? Are they inclined toward cooperativeness and helpfulness? Have they been trained to take responsibility? Can they communicate well? Do they have an array of socially useful skills?

The level of children's Sense of Connectiveness will have much to do with how they adapt to school in kindergarten and the primary grades. As children get older, the family influence is more directed to the way it supports the teacher's efforts to teach and socialize the children. Even though teachers and schools can not influence families before their children come to school, after the children are there for a while, the school can begin to influence the parents.

In a cooperatively inclined classroom that places high value on social responsibility, the school's relationship with the children's families is very important. If families reinforce the cooperative and socially responsible values for which the classroom stands, the children's adaptation to school and their engagement in learning activities will be stronger. In most instances, this means including the children's families in the web of cooperation. We will discuss this at greater length in the next chapter.

Whatever the status of their families, children will hold loyally to their beliefs and seek to exemplify them in school. If the teacher recognizes the power of the family over a child's behavior and performance, respects that power and doesn't try to work in opposition to it, it's likely the child's background can be an asset, not a liability.

Children's feelings of affiliation to the school, teachers and peers will reflect their parents' feelings in some way. Therefore, it's to the teacher's advantage to increase the parents' feelings of affiliation to support those of the children. Since such feelings are fundamental to the success of a cooperative learning environment, having them reinforced at home is essential. Often the only way to have contact with families is

to write to them or send notes home with the children. The families may not respond, but they will be influenced by positive things the teacher says about their children.

Some children who come to school with low Connectiveness have one or more parents with a similar problem. These parents may be disinclined to become involved with the social activities of the school or form a close or affectional relationship with the teacher. Teachers need to reach out to such parents in much the same way they work with low Connectiveness children.

You may not see the evidence of parental support by the parents' attendance at school or class functions. Parents' chief influence on your classroom's climate is through the way in which they support, value, and reinforce their children's engagement and commitment.

The Mood of the School

The classroom climate is influenced by the general school climate. This is not through some mysterious effluence coming through the walls. Both the children and the teacher have connections throughout the day with other parts of the school environment. Their feelings are affected by those connections and are brought back to the classroom and, in turn, affect it.

A teaching staff united through common goals, training, democratic decision making, multiple arenas for interacting and similar teaching strategies and led by a supportive administrator is likely to feel pretty good about what it's doing. Teachers in their own classrooms are conscious of the common bond uniting them to their colleagues. They feel safe enough to take risks, try out new ideas, and push the edge of their own capabilities, because they know they'll get support if they need it.

The climate of a classroom devoted to cooperative methods

is enhanced when it's embedded in a school where similar methods are practiced in other classrooms, as well as within the teaching staff itself.

Cooperation and social responsibility are not "subjects" that can be taught in isolation from the context in which they take place. Children who are practicing cooperative behavior need a wider arena in which to apply what they learn. The school as a whole needs to be this wider arena.

Teachers who want their classrooms to be devoted to cooperation and social responsibility have a vested interest in their schools becoming similarly oriented. Without this support, the classroom climate becomes infected by the adverse values or negative experiences children undergo in their out-of-class activities.

The conditions contributing to a positive climate for cooperation within a school are the same as those that contribute to raising and maintaining teacher self-esteem. The goal of enhancing teacher self-esteem is to enable all members of a teaching staff to experience a high level of satisfaction from their work.

Committees, task forces, yard and bus duty, parent conferences, curriculum development, inservice training activities—these are some of the arenas in which teachers need to be able to find satisfying expression for their interests and skills. The school is more than a collection of classrooms. Decision-making opportunities, professional growth and the whole spectrum of professional and personal relationships with coworkers are important parts of teachers' daily experience in a school.

These experiences occur within a web of administrative rules, policies, regulations, standards and expectations. They affect the way teachers feel no less than similar processes affect children in the classroom. Taken together, they form a climate within a school that affects the way the staff feels about the school, and, ultimately, the quality of teaching that occurs.

The overall mood of the school reaches into classrooms in many ways, through the experiences of both the children and the teachers. The general public thinks an individual teacher, working behind the closed doors of his or her room, is the sole arbiter of what happens to the children in that room. But professionals know that the web of relationships and procedures making the modern school a complex human system has power that often undermines a good teacher's best efforts. But this system also has the potential to enhance the positive influence of good teachers in many ways.

The Teacher's Special Influence

Because children's relationships with their teachers are intense, ongoing and have emotional consequences, the teacher has a special influence. This influence is exercised through the various structured relationships implicit in teaching activities and communicated through the instructional language used to deliver the curriculum. Teachers affect the way children feel all the time, through the teaching methodologies they use and the moment to moment human interactions that occur in the classroom.

The number of ways teachers consciously go about building and maintaining a classroom climate may be uncountable. But the conscious efforts are just the tip of the iceberg. Every teacher has moods and feelings that will affect behavior in subtle ways.

The classroom climate is affected by the high and low conditions of self-esteem within each teacher. And every teacher's teaching methods, instructional styles, communication patterns and activity selections are influenced to a considerable degree by that teacher's beliefs, values, personality, prior experience and feelings of comfort and satisfaction. Teaching is

more than a mechanical process by which a method is selected to deliver a packet of knowledge, as if it were a computerized factory. Teaching is a very personal business.

Because of this, the teacher's personal qualities influence what he or she does and the outcome in a child's learning and satisfaction. A pervading idea in education is that dysfunctional student responses to a teacher must be corrected within the students; they must be helped to adjust to the teacher. The best teachers, on the other hand, adjust their approach to meet the different needs of their students. That's why the best teachers are decidedly more effective. But the ability of a teacher to make such adjustments is a function of the teacher's own flexibility, versatility, willingness to take risks, sensitivity and empathy—personal factors that reflect the teacher's self-esteem.

Teachers' self-esteem works the same way as children's. There is an internal aspect—the strength of the various conditions—and an external aspect—the way in which the environment interacts with the teacher's self-esteem profile. This is why the teacher alone is not the sole arbiter of the classroom climate.

What teachers bring to the classroom reflects their own life experience up to that point, their successes and failures, satisfactions and disappointments. The various factors influencing classroom climate also influence the way teachers' self-esteem is enhanced or diminished by their experience at the school. When beneficial factors influence the classroom climate, even teachers with marginal self-esteem are greatly supported. When those factors are negative, even teachers with high self-esteem will feel uncomfortable and dissatisfied with the work environment.

Teachers seek to be comfortable in their own classrooms; they select teaching tactics allowing them to do this. But sometimes the practices that make a teacher comfortable do

not make the children comfortable. This can result in children resisting the teacher and disengaging from learning. Classroom practices which make a teacher comfortable may not be good teaching methods.

In order to understand the impact personal style has on classroom climate, teachers must pay attention to their feelings and look for variations in children's behavior that correlate with them. Teachers' awareness of their own styles and the effects of this style will give them information about how they influence the climate in their classrooms. Which children does the teacher like most? With whom does he or she work best? Which children make the teacher uncomfortable?

It's difficult for a teacher to assess this alone. Networking within the teaching staff can create a context of cooperation in which teachers can get feedback from peers about these factors.

Teaching performance can also be enhanced by the development of strategies that align comfort and effectiveness. Research suggests this is more likely to happen when teachers are actively engaged in influencing the design and delivery of their own training. Wise teachers will seek to bring about this alignment through engagement in professional and personal growth activities.

Chapter

6 Seven Basic Strategies

Trying to build cooperative attitudes and develop children's sense of social responsibility without using cooperative learning strategies would be a difficult, if not impossible task. The essential point of view of this book is that an entire school will move toward building a specific ethic by integrating teaching strategies, school goals, school climate factors and the curriculum.

Rather than repeat the excellent material on cooperative learning already available to teachers,* I will show how specific corollary practices support cooperative learning and solve certain problems that often arise in the process of implementing it. I have selected techniques that have a powerful influence on self-esteem. Not only will I show why they have this influence, but also why they are more likely to result in children's experiences being emotionally significant and intellectually productive.

In this chapter I will describe seven basic strategies for enhancing cooperation and social responsibility:

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* Appendix A provides a list of some of these resources.

- Student/teacher cooperation
- Team building
- Variety of group interaction
- Parents/classroom interaction
- Community resources
- Friendship groupings
- Peer and cross-age tutoring

These strategies are most important because they combine cooperative learning approaches with cooperative behavior and develop the sense of social responsibility. They do this in ways that are natural and consistent with good teaching practices, by employing cognitive skills and developing emotional ones. The strategies help maintain and enhance self-esteem. They are important features of an overall climate of cooperation in the classroom and school.

Many ways to structure and implement these strategies are available, and individual teachers need to find their own best methods. All these strategies are "natural" in the sense they don't need formal planning in order to be used. They can become spontaneous features in a teacher's day-to-day behavior. They don't require a whole school to employ them, although they are even more powerful when this occurs.

Student/Teacher Cooperation

The most powerful arena for teaching cooperative skills to children is often overlooked; this is the cooperative relationship between teachers and students.

Teacher behavior is both a model children emulate and a method for teaching specific skills. Parents teach children to

cooperate by demonstrating cooperative behavior with others, even when children are only observers, e.g., when children observe parents amicably resolve a disagreement with someone or help a friend in need. They also engage in activities with children that permit reciprocal cooperative behavior, e.g., when parents and children work together to put away toys that have been left in the living room or build a tree fort.

Children watch and interact with teachers in much the same way. But they differ as to how important the activity is in promoting their comfort and satisfaction. Children with a lower Sense of Connectiveness need more interaction with teachers than children with high Connectiveness because low Connectiveness children feel *safer* in relationships with their teachers than with their peers. Children with very low Sense of Connectiveness (withdrawn, clinging, anxious or alienated) need a positive relationship with their teacher before they can reach out in appropriate ways to their classmates.

The special virtue of cooperation between teacher and children is the combination of content and affiliation such relationships have. In learning to cooperate, children find they can achieve important objectives while fulfilling their affiliation needs. There are several ways teachers can create occasions for cooperation between themselves and children, singly or in groups.

Emphasize the chores and duties you already have in the classroom. But define them as opportunities for children to help you. ("It would be a big help to me if you'd straighten the books on this shelf," rather than, "These books need straightening. Would you do it?") Personalizing the activity helps children with low Connectiveness feel closer to the teacher and motivated to perform the task because they feel the teacher will like them more. Children with an adequate Sense of Connectiveness don't need the activity framed in this fashion, but aren't harmed when it is.

Have some cooperative tasks that can only be done at recess, lunch or after school. Moving desks or changing wall displays are two examples. Inviting children to help you at such times adds the power of a special relationship to the cooperative nature of the activity. Children with low Connectiveness benefit from not having to share your attention with others. The focus should remain on the task, so the interaction has a "taking care of business" attitude to it, even though low Connectiveness children will feel closer to you.

Use children as much as possible to do things you might ordinarily do yourself. One teacher who was especially good with problem children kept a group of "assistants" around him all day long. He'd send them on errands, such as taking messages to the office, or have them pick up papers as they walked through the campus. This teacher was always asking one or another of his assistants to do something "important" that had social significance. The kids loved it and they prospered.

Think of cooperation as a two way street. It's a relationship of mutual benefit. What can you do for children that's as important to them as what they can do for you? It will be different from your usual teaching role. Do they need your help at lunchtime, time you might usually spend in the teacher's room? By specifically showing you're reciprocating the help they give you, you create a cooperative atmosphere.

A simple way to communicate cooperative intent is to ask, "May I help you?" before correcting an error you see a child make. It's more than good manners, it's a symbolic declaration of the cooperative equity you have with each other.

Team Building

Learning teams are intrinsic to cooperative learning activities, whatever method of cooperativeness is employed. But team building is a useful theme to emphasize in many ways because it helps children internalize cooperativeness.

Create ways for children to work together in teams to accomplish a variety of tasks. The more they do this, the more adept they'll become in doing it on their own, if you're patient while they're learning. Here are some suggestions:

- Have different teams responsible for clearing different sections of the room after activities. Change the teams occasionally.
- Have a "runners" team, a revolving group to run errands and messages and get supplies. The team must set up a way to share the responsibility. They then tell you who the next runner is, rather than you having to remember, similar to the messenger services in a big city's financial district.
- Have teams that last for a week or two at recess and P.E. activities so groups can learn to benefit from each other's strengths and compensate for each other's weaknesses in different activities over time. Changing teams will increase the children's skill in developing group cohesion quickly in a variety of activities.

Variety of Group Interaction

An important principle in group cohesion is that the more different ways a group interacts, the more cohesive the group will become over time. Good families are the paradigm for this. It's not the amount of time they spend together that

promotes a family's integration, it's the number of different things they do when they are together that result in satisfaction for its members.

Similarly, in order to promote the feeling of cohesion that lies at the core of children's willingness to cooperate and be socially responsible, teachers need to arrange various ways for children to interact in the classroom.

Explore the wide variety of curricular areas where cooperative learning can occur. Everything from art to health can be taught using cooperative methods. The more content areas in which such methods are used the more variety is introduced into children's interactions.

Give children things to do in groups or pairs. "Jeremy and Veronica, please clean the paste brushes for me." "Angela and Demont, will you please take this note to the office?" "You three seem to know a part of this lesson, but not all of it. Work together on page 47, share what you know with each other and see what you can complete during this period."

Committees, teams, task forces, work groups, projects, coaching—there are many forms for interaction. Parties, games, homework, tutoring and sharing work and play in many forms can be done throughout the day. Some of the activities will be structured, some will not. But, similar to play groups in the neighborhood, the more children interact with each other, the more adept they become at getting their group "stuff" done, independent of adult supervision.

Schools are generally reluctant to let children learn things on their own through "cut and try" approaches, despite the observation that it's the way children learn most things. But having children work and play together in groups adds this feature to structured cooperative learning methods, since the variety of problems and opportunities children uncover from group work will be more than the teacher can plan.

Children learn by using what they know and applying it to new situations, seeking new data as they find the old data insufficient to meet their needs. Social behavior especially is infused with this kind of learning. Giving children a broad variety of opportunities to use cooperative skills is the best way to increase the likelihood they'll learn these skills well.

Parent/Classroom Interaction

The climate for cooperation in the classroom is enhanced by extending that web of cooperation to the home and community as much as possible. Bringing parents and community into classroom activities is one way; taking the classroom to parents and community is the other. This is an area where total school support can make a great difference. A school culture should include parents and community as ordinary parts of the educational program. A persistent effort to keep parents informed about what happens at school is the most important first step.

Newsletters are nice, but most parents like to have a "private newsletter" telling them how well their children are doing! Parents are motivated to support the school if they believe their support contributes to improving their child's performance.

Efforts to solicit parent involvement often only reach those parents who would be involved in any case. The ones we're most concerned about are those who need to show more interest, but don't. Since parents whose children have problems in school may have had similar problems when they were in school, the emotional issues surrounding parents' investment in their children's school problems are intense and little understood.

Personalize parent contacts as much as possible. This is most needed in situations without avid parent support or where many children need more of it. Classroom newsletters

are better, for example, than newsletters from the school's administration and positive notes home are better than newsletters. Face to face contacts are good, but they only work for parents who show up.

The most important role for parents in children's education is not what they do at school or with the teacher; it's what they do with the child at home. Parents' main function isn't helping children with homework, it's supporting their children in the overall educational process. With respect to cooperation and social responsibility, parents have a key role in reinforcing what teachers do in the classroom by emphasizing the same qualities at home as much as possible.

Parents need to know or see the following:

- The importance of cooperative learning methods and the advantage they provide for children's learning.
- How these methods are used in the classroom and school and what specific experiences children are having.
- Evidence of productivity arising from cooperative behavior in the classroom.

Show parents how cooperative methods help their children. Be specific in notes sent home or products displayed. Parent open house could occur more than once or twice a year if the teaching staff wants to expose more parents to what's happening. Open house doesn't have to occur for the whole school at once; perhaps one grade level at a time would help parents who have more than one child in the school.

Soliciting cooperation from parents is a two-way street, just as with children. Do they feel they can get your help and support, as well as give theirs to you? Many parents need concrete help with specific child rearing practices. Can the school offer such help?

When you emphasize social responsibility, parents should know what principles or issues you're dealing with. These issues will certainly show up at home. If you're discussing personal virtues, such as honesty, courage or responsibility, parents can help emphasize them at home.

A regular note home about individual children can pay even more dividends. Implying a child's good performance reflects the parents' positive action is never a bad idea, and it's often true. Parents want credit for the good things their children do; they already get enough blame for the bad things, including self-blame.

The real issue in this effort is enhancing parents' self-esteem. In eliciting parents' support for your efforts in cooperation and social responsibility, parents' Sense of Connectiveness and Models are no less important than their children's.

The main issue with respect to these two conditions of self-esteem is whether parents feel they have a mutually supportive relationship with the school (Connectiveness) and whether they understand what the school is doing for their children (Models). Many of the suggestions for raising these two conditions of self-esteem for children can be adapted for parents.

Schools give lip service to parent involvement and then complain when parents aren't involved. Schools are responsible for teaching children; but home life is the crucible within which motivation and willingness to learn are forged. The self-esteem of parents and children are shaped in the home and can be affected by how they both are involved with the school. Time and attention spent in understanding how to influence parents' self-esteem is most likely to pay off at school.

Community Resources

The district and the school as a whole have an important role to play in creating the general climate of community support.

The classroom teacher needs to access the support that's developed.

Having children engaged with the community in some way is considered valuable. Field trips are used to motivate, expand experience, find application for classroom learning, combat boredom and reward children for working hard. Children can learn important things, both on field trips and when the community enters the classroom through speakers, resources and special events.

Use the community to supplement what children learn about cooperation and social responsibility in the classroom. Teachers need to seek out and expose children to the way these two factors are exemplified in the local community.

Visiting the fire department is an example. Climbing on the fire engine is great fun! But the key to effectiveness among fire personnel is the highly intricate and complex system of mutual support and cooperation that goes into the work. A trip to the fire department can be used to increase children's understanding of how cooperation and social responsibility work.

Seek out local businesses that depend on cooperative effort and encourage them to allow children to see their inner workings. Because a growing number of business people find young workers deficient in knowing how to work in a team setting, many businesses will quickly understand and support the school in teaching these skills.

Children can come away from such experiences knowing more about how people work together, not just how unusual or interesting the work is. This information can be used in the classroom to support cooperation.

Older children can learn how the community is integrated, as well as how the different parts work together to form a web of social and governmental services and functions. Using a theme, such as "Building a House," children can be shown how the labyrinth of connections within government and between

government and the private sector work. The goal is to understand how parts of a system work together.

Most things happening at the community level depend on many people working in concert, often covering vast distances. Children have no idea how a potato grown hundreds of miles away becomes a French fry at the local McDonalds. The chain of events bringing the potato to their mouths is one forged by people working together. If they knew this, children's view of the world would be greatly enhanced.

A classroom devoted to cooperation and social responsibility uses the community to teach about these factors. The array of opportunities to learn about cooperation and social responsibility in real life from the local community is endless.

Friendship Groupings

After the family, friendship is the most powerful socializing influence. Sometimes it's even more influential. Parents know some friends are good influences, while others are bad influences on their children. Teachers know what a powerful distraction friends can be. In a classroom devoted to cooperation and social responsibility, friends need to be seen as a resource for learning rather than an impediment to it.

Friendship is irrelevant to learning only when learning is seen as an individual or competitive activity. When learning is seen as a cooperative activity, friendships become relevant and can be used by children in the service of learning. When children don't have friends or aren't permitted to interact appropriately with friends during the school day, maintaining friendships becomes difficult and oppositional to school tasks. But when friends promote each other's success in school, the relationships deepen. A web of fulfilling friendships is more likely to promote a lifelong inclination to socially responsible behavior than anything else.

In most elementary and middle school classrooms, there is a mixture of children who have friends in the class with whom they associate at home and children who have no in-class friendships carrying over into home life. This results in two issues regarding friendships: honoring the friendship groupings that already exist so they support, rather than undermine, the learning climate; and promoting friendships in class that will carry over outside school.

Two dimensions to friendship relations affect the cooperative classroom. The first is the breadth of friendship connections. This involves children feeling they have mutually friendly relationships with others in their class, i.e., relationships having a comfortable level of trust, good communication and familiarity. The more widespread this feeling of friendliness, the more likely group activities will be positive ones.

The second dimension is the depth of friendship connections. This is the intensity of feeling among friends, involving factors such as loyalty, empathy and affection, as well as trust, communication and familiarity. The depth of friendship grows as children get older and depend more and more on relationships outside their families to fulfill their affiliative needs. Deeper friendships among children also are a function of the variety of interactions; this variety is more likely to result from associations that occur both at home and at school.

Children's Sense of Connectiveness influences the breadth and depth of their friendship relations. Children with low Connectiveness will have few friends and even fewer with whom there is much positive emotional intensity. Children with high Connectiveness will have a broader network of friendly relationships, even though they have strong emotional connections with only a few.

One of the factors that confuses casual observation of friendship groupings in classrooms is the "like-seeking-like" phenomenon. Children with high Connectiveness tend to form

mutually satisfying relationships with other high Connectiveness children. If they are not loners, children with low Connectiveness tend to form relationships with other low Connectiveness children. These latter relationships are unstable, problematic and often the source of teachers' discomfort in allowing friends to work together often.

The main difference between low and high Connectiveness children in friendship relations is the degree to which they depend on others to make them feel good. Low Connectiveness children place demands on others, straining a relationship and making it unstable. High Connectiveness children take more responsibility for holding up their end, resulting in a greater sense of equity in a relationship. What we call "skill" in friendship relations is basically how children go about maintaining a balance between what they demand from the relationship and what they give to it.

Cooperative activities can fail to work when children are spending more time on relationship issues than the task at hand. Children who require others to satisfy them in relationships focus on the quality of the relationship rather than the task with which the group is coping. These low Connectiveness children won't focus on group tasks until they're convinced others like them. High Connectiveness children can be more task-oriented because they presume they're liked. Building Connectiveness allows more children the freedom to focus on group learning tasks.

Teaching relationship skills is valuable. But children's ability to use these skills will depend on their Sense of Connectiveness. Raising children's Sense of Connectiveness changes the balance between what they need from relationships and what they can bring to them. Enhancing Connectiveness improves children's ability to bring something to the learning group.

The way you group children in cooperative activities should allow children to work with their friends *and* extend

the range of their friendships. Some groupings should be stable, while others should change for different activities. There are advantages to both.

In a classroom where there is breadth of friendly relationships, grouping children with close friends to help them feel connected is less necessary, even though a high degree of satisfaction results from doing so. The variety of interaction involved in changing work groups extends the feeling of friendliness throughout the class and is especially important for giving children with lower Connectiveness feelings of inclusion.

Extending in-class relationships outside school deepens the connections between children as their Sense of Connectiveness rises. There are several ways to promote this:

- Encourage parents to support relationships among classmates by invitations and allowing their children to visit others. Solicit parent's approval for circulating all parents' phone numbers through a class roster.
- Give homework assignments to learning teams living in close proximity. This, of course, is not reasonable if children live at great distances from each other. Let parents know before you do this, since it is not a common practice.
- Encourage children to talk about their experiences together outside of school in classroom discussions. This helps you be aware of friendship patterns as the school year progresses. Encourage children to think about what promotes satisfying activities with friends when they're not in school.
- Refrain from promoting out of school relationships in order to raise children's Sense of Connectiveness. This can result in problems when children can't maintain such

relationships. Work on raising their Connectiveness in the classroom and an interest in connections out of school will develop naturally.

- Gradually increase the amount of homework and number of out of school projects that can be done in groups during the year. Assess the stability of friendship groups and their ability to include schoolwork as part of their repertoire. Start by enabling friends to work together in school.

Peer and Cross-Age Tutoring

Most teachers are familiar with the idea of cross-age and/or peer tutoring. They are variations on the same theme. The works on cooperative learning offer guidance in how to set up such programs and how to train children to do it well. Peer tutoring programs are mainly done within classrooms, while cross-age tutoring programs occur between classrooms.

Tutoring programs are an adjunct to cooperative learning groups. In competitive or individualistic learning climates, peer and cross-age tutoring are important because they give academic help and promote strong relationships between children. In cooperative settings the latter purpose is generally less important, but it may be very important for specific children.

When the school's program emphasizes social responsibility, peer and cross-age tutoring should play a very important role and be used throughout the program. Reasons for this go beyond the simple purpose of helping slower children improve through drill with other students. Tutoring programs help children who are experiencing difficulty with learning, whether they are the ones being tutored or the tutors, for the following reasons:

Low Connectiveness children benefit from relating to others in structured one-to-one relationships. (This is why these children so frequently show competence when working alone with the teacher that they don't demonstrate when working by themselves.) One-to-one relationships, in which roles and responsibilities are clarified, help low Connectiveness children because they reduce complexity and distractions, increase task orientation and promote safe feelings.

Being a tutor requires more than just academic prowess. Low Connectiveness children are often not chosen to be tutors, since they frequently have learning/behavior problems resulting from low self-esteem. More often, they are the ones being tutored. As tutors, though, they benefit both from the structured relationship and from the enhanced status achieved by being a tutor in a system that values the role. Since low Connectiveness children often know more than they are able to demonstrate comfortably, they can prove quite competent tutors. The qualities that make a child a good tutor, e.g., patience, empathy, tolerance and supportiveness, are not necessarily associated with high academic performance.

Tutoring another child is an activity with social value. It is helpful behavior and gives the tutor a socially important role, especially in a system that values social responsibility. It may be the first time a child has been allowed to exercise social responsibility in such an important way. Tutoring programs introduce the value of social responsibility directly into the school's program in a way few other activities do. They allow children to quickly experience the benefits of helpfulness. The children who are involved in tutoring (at one time or another a very large percentage of children in a school could be) experience the benefits of socially responsible behavior. Imagine what it might mean to a child who has been tutored to the point of mastery in some intellectual operation

to be asked, in turn, to tutor a younger child in the same subject!

Tutoring programs raise the climate of helpfulness in a school or classroom. Where children are expected to be helpful toward each other, helping with the work is natural. Tutoring is important because it provides help to those who need it and structures helpful relations for those who might otherwise be on the periphery of such relations. Low Connectiveness children will benefit most from structured tutoring programs.

There are some important factors to consider when planning tutoring programs. Matching high Connectiveness students as tutors with low Connectiveness students is only useful if the former have *very* high Connectiveness. Children who are merely sociable may not have the important attributes of high Connectiveness, such as patience and empathy, needed for maintaining relations with a low Connectiveness child, and the low Connectiveness child may be intimidated by high Connectiveness behaviors. The key to helping two lower Connectiveness children benefit from a tutoring relationship is to structure it, and clearly lay out the goals and time limits.

The basic unit of cooperation is two people working together toward a common goal, distributing the work in a functional way between themselves. Tutoring programs are fundamentally cooperative since the tutor also benefits greatly from the relationship. In a cooperatively oriented classroom, the personal and social benefits of cooperation are no less important than the academic ones.

Chapter

7 New Approaches to Special Problems

This chapter discusses matters that need additional analysis so they won't stand in the way of implementing cooperative practices. The Four Conditions of Self-Esteem model provides solutions for these seemingly intractable problems.

In my discussions with teachers over many years, I've noticed that when they are enjoined to use a new approach or practice, their mind's eye roves over the children in their class, assessing how the new practice will affect them. If they decide, in that moment, that there are too many children in their classroom who would make it hard to implement the new idea, they won't try it. Teachers often decide there are too many "special problems."

Implementing a cooperative atmosphere in the classroom and in the way you teach will be most obstructed by children who are discipline problems, by a small percentage who just don't cooperate, and by those who seem to benefit greatly from competitive practices. In addition, at-risk children, in general, demand so much time and attention, so much energy and forethought, that general approaches to their specific problems seem fruitless.

Ethnic conflicts reach into many of our schools, often down into the lower grades. Ethnicity is often the most obvious referent for differences among groups that make cooperation difficult. Differences in economic status, the part of town in which children live and religion can also be divisive. The conflicts between groups often seem to make cooperative classrooms a noble, but unrealistic goal.

These are the special problems to which this chapter is devoted.

Self-Esteem: The Great Equalizer

Viewing children's behavior from the perspective of self-esteem enables teachers to evaluate children's internal dynamics as well as the external circumstances that influence their school performance. When self-esteem is seen as the "driver," there's almost always something that can be done to influence children.

Self-esteem work is based on children's observed behavior in the school setting. Regardless of their backgrounds, children who have the same self-esteem deficits will demonstrate these defects in like ways and benefit from corresponding interventions. Children with a low Sense of Connectiveness, for example, will more resemble each other than similar children with different self-esteem problems or high self-esteem.

Special problems that keep children from benefiting from school can be inside children, e.g., emotional issues clouding their responses to learning opportunities; or they can be outside children, e.g., the family, neighborhood or other social influences that continue to undermine children's ability to gain satisfaction from school. There can also be factors in the school setting itself that keep children from being successful.

In recent years we have seen many innovative programs

that seem to help children be more successful than their characteristics would predict. Whether or not these special programs have general application is not the issue here. What these programs have shown is that schools can mitigate influences in children's social experience. Careful analysis of such programs is likely to show they all have an impact on self-esteem.

When children's self-esteem is handled appropriately, their discomfort with school decreases and the satisfaction they experience from learning activities and social relationships increases. Cooperative learning activities, a climate of cooperation and the development of social responsibility are likely to promote self-esteem and improve school performance.

Children who don't seem to benefit from cooperative teaching strategies or who disrupt the classroom or school attempting to practice these programs are special problems. The normative categories often used to define these children are at-risk, learning handicapped, emotionally handicapped, mentally retarded, behavior disordered, physically handicapped and an array of cognitive disabilities generally clumped as educationally handicapped.

All of these categories have a body of theory and practice that seems to apply to many children so labeled, although it never fits for all within the category. Effective treatment of these various disabilities also demands special resources and training. There is usually an insufficient amount of one or both in most school systems.

Doing Enough of the Right Thing

Two factors determine whether a teacher or school will be successful in treating a special problem, no matter what the definition or label. One is selecting the most appropriate method for dealing with the problem; the second is doing enough of

the right thing! It is often the case that the right tactic was selected, but it wasn't performed often enough or intensively enough to make a difference.

Let's use a simple example dealing with children who have a low Sense of Connectiveness. One important feature of the worldview of low Connectiveness children is their tendency to distrust and distort the meaning of what is said or done to them. They may not accept simple affection or distinguish between criticism and helpful suggestions. The main treatment for low Connectiveness children is to reach out to them when they don't expect it and to require nothing in return.

This simple intervention must be done over and over again in order to overcome low Connectiveness children's deep mistrust of others. Even if this seems to make a difference in a child's behavior, abandoning the strategy prematurely will result in regression in the child's behavior and performance. Doing the right thing, but not doing enough of it, will have either a neutral or, if the child experiences the reduction of the teacher's interest as another disappointing rejection, a negative effect.

Every tactic for influencing children's feelings, attitudes, behavior or academic performance has implications for self-esteem. Any tactic that results in changing any of these factors does so through the mechanism of children's feelings. Children who are members of those above mentioned special categories, whose behavior gets in the way of maintaining a cooperative classroom climate, have special self-esteem problems irrespective of the normative categories in which they may be placed. It doesn't matter what you call children who are not benefiting from or contributing to a cooperative classroom climate—the most useful way to change their behavior is to influence their self-esteem. This is something good teaching has shown can be done in spite of the powerful influence of out-of-school factors.

So I will not be accused of the worst sort of reductionism or the simplistic solutions to educational problems often proposed by politicians and other non-educator critics of education, here is my disclaimer! In the best of all worlds, all children would have their special needs addressed appropriately and effectively. In the real world, educators make small gains from time to time. Many features of American educational practice compromise teachers' ability to meet the needs of every child. The length of the school day and year, class size, limited material resources and conflicting political pressures place real limits on teaching effectiveness. Not every intention of even the best teachers can be carried out fully. Some children will not be fully served by the massive educational bureaucracies we seem required to support.

Cooperation and social responsibility are overwhelmingly supported as effective teaching methods by years of research. Low self-esteem is the common problem underlying children's inability to benefit from good teaching, irrespective of the problem category they may represent. Combining these teaching methods with an understanding of self-esteem can result in maximal positive influence on special problem children.

At-Risk Children

The term "at-risk" is applied to children who are most likely to be unsuccessful in school because of circumstances in their lives which the school is powerless to control. Family dysfunction, poverty, abuse, drug effects, delinquency and physiological deficits are some of the chief factors used to define children as at-risk. Sometimes the definition is more broad, sometimes more narrow. Some of the broader definitions could include most children at one time or another. At-risk children who are demographically defined by poverty, ethnicity or neighborhood usually are treated as members of a group rather than as individuals.

Children labeled at-risk may receive specific remedial help designed for the category to which they belong. These children might also be stigmatized by a label that doesn't take into account individual variations within the category. In any case, at-risk children's deficiencies (low academic performance, low motivation, problem behavior) will be seen as the result of being part of the group rather than as a result of inappropriate treatment of the symptom.

In other words, the children and/or their circumstances will be seen as the problem, not as the result of how the school is responding to their individual needs. Classifying children according to categories external to the school *always* places children at risk because the school can claim to be powerless to deal with a particular category.

Discipline in the Cooperative Classroom

Discipline issues vary according to whether cooperation, competition or individualism is the dominant context within a classroom or school. Competitive teaching tactics don't work well for children who have a low Sense of Power, for example, and discipline issues often are a result of the struggles of children with low Power to protect their self-esteem, tattered and torn though it may be! Individualistic teaching methods tend not to work well with children who have low Uniqueness and/or low Models. The characteristic discipline issues arising in that context will predominantly reflect the struggles of those children.

In cooperative learning situations, discipline problems will tend to center on children with a low Sense of Connectiveness. Fortunately, teaching strategies consistent with cooperative learning have many built-in mechanisms to overcome low Connectiveness, when used in the context of the overall strategies suggested in Chapter 6.

One of the dilemmas regarding discipline in the classroom is that it can't be separated from teaching itself. When children feel interested, safe, satisfied and fully engaged at school, there are rarely significant discipline problems. This is true in both inner-city and upper-class suburban schools. Bad teaching always results in discipline problems, often masked by the severity of the rules and consequences in a particular situation.

Bad teaching is teaching that uses tactics without accurately considering children's emotional needs or learning styles, whether the teacher understands and conveys the material precisely or not.

In a cooperative classroom and school, discipline procedures will build the Sense of Connectiveness. The following discipline practices build Connectiveness, while also enhancing other conditions of self-esteem:

- Staff agrees on and applies all rules in the same way.
- Parents are familiarized with rules and procedures.
- Classroom activities show children how their behaviors affect others.
- Students know the same rules apply to everyone.
- A student council has some authority to influence discipline.
- School and classroom goals are clear.
- Classes receive recognition for exemplary behavior.
- Inservice training for behavior management is ongoing.
- Staff and administration work together closely.
- A school manual of discipline exists.
- Appropriate behavior is emphasized.

Children Who Don't Cooperate

There often will be a few children who don't cooperate, even though you've done everything right! Who are they and why do they consistently act in opposition to methods that work so well for most children?

Children who have a low Sense of Connectiveness combined with a low Sense of Power are special problems in a cooperative learning classroom. The following is a list of the most problematic behaviors of these children:

- They combine a high level of impulsivity with a low ability to assess the effect they're having on others. High impulsivity is the same as low self-control; it is a chronic sign of low Power.
- They cannot engage the compassion of their peers because of their low Connectiveness. When their often aggressive behavior becomes offensive, they don't have the ability to elicit forgiveness. This cycle makes them more and more desperate for approval. These children are often not liked by others (sometimes including the teacher) and they know it.
- Even when they are taught or shown how to behave correctly, they don't have the assertiveness to use what they've learned if the slightest obstacle arises.
- When someone shows affection, compassion or friendliness toward them, their reaction can be so effusive (again due to low self-control) that they make the person reluctant to try again. This pattern is a continuing reminder to these children that they're not likable.

The children who don't cooperate combine high distractibility (low Connectiveness) and inability to persist in a difficult task (low Power). While either one of these problems may

be handled by an experienced learning team, even in the lower grades, the combination of the two characteristics is more than most children can handle in the classroom. This is what makes them so disruptive in learning teams, frustrating their peers when they can't carry their share of the learning team's load.

Often low Connectiveness/low Power children have been emotionally, physically or sexually abused. If the abuse has been severe, they may be so withdrawn their overt behavior will not be aggressive, but they will have terrible learning problems. If they have not been so severely abused as to have withdrawn into themselves, their behavior will have the aggressive distortions described above. Children who don't act out their pain are often more disturbed than children who do.

Any teacher who has worked closely with abused children knows how difficult the recovery process is. There are no simple solutions to having these children in a classroom, and they need special treatment. The following suggestions may help:

- A one-to-one situation, the smallest learning group possible, works better for these children. Their behavior may improve with a peer or older tutor, at least part of the time.
- All learning tasks should be very short, so these children can have frequent experiences of completion and success. As their behavior improves, the length of the task can expand.
- Make these children part of a team for some activities, especially outdoor, physical and noisy ones. Their impulsivity may be less disruptive and may actually be more functional in such groups.
- Ancillary counseling for the child and the family is indicated, although this is hard for a classroom teacher

to promote. Even with such counseling, change may proceed slowly.

- Working on the Sense of Connectiveness is more important for these children than working on the Sense of Power. This means that productivity must give way to emotional security. Using Power-building tactics without a warm, affectional and supportive context will not work for long. Since these children's mistrust is profound, they may disappoint a caring teacher by seeming to reject affection.
- Liking these children is difficult; feeling sorry for them is not the same as liking them. Self-esteem enhancing tactics provide a structured way for a teacher to interact with these children when he or she is not motivated to do so by real affection.

Although children who have problems with any self-esteem condition will present dilemmas to the teacher, low Connectiveness/low Power children are a special problem in cooperative classrooms. Fortunately, the number of children who have dual critical conditions is small. Most children have one self-esteem condition as the main problem to remedy.

Highly Competitive Children

Highly competitive children present a special problem because they interfere with the integration of cooperative learning teams. I pointed out previously that children with high Power and low Connectiveness have a strong tendency to engage in competitive activities because they are successful at them. I suggested working on their low Sense of Connectiveness to remedy the problem.

Children with a low Sense of Power also present some

special problems in regard to competitiveness. Children who combine their low Power with a low Sense of Uniqueness continue to try to compete although they often fail! Failing is more than an event for these children; it's a statement about who they are. Failing has become part of their self-image. Children with a low Sense of Uniqueness will persist in maintaining their consistent self-concept even though it's a negative one.

These children have found that persisting in a competitive attitude is the surest way to fail and thus maintain their negative self-concepts. It is usual for children with a low Sense of Uniqueness to present such paradoxical behavior. They insist they have better ideas when they don't; they attempt to cover up their lack of productivity (they may not have done their share of the work) by making excuses and blaming others; they try to be the center of attention in a group or learning team rather than contributing to the group's goal; and they often seek to control the team through silliness.

Strangely, these children may have good Connectiveness, with the result that they maintain good relations with their peers, the teacher continues to like them (although exasperated with their silliness), and they find a way to get back into everyone's good graces after having held up the group.

Working on the Sense of Power is most useful in these children. Trying to change their Sense of Uniqueness directly will prove fruitless, since their roles in the groups to which they belong are important and they will resist the change. Following are some suggestions for dealing with low Power, low Uniqueness children, especially in cooperative learning activities:

- Set clear and firm boundaries for behavior in groups and quickly and consistently impose sanctions for not staying within those boundaries. Give prior warnings so children always have a choice as to whether they'll honor limits or accept consequences.

- Removal from the group is a punishment for these children if their Sense of Connectiveness is strong enough to make group membership an important value for them.
- Support the learning team in dealing with these children, since the other children may not be sophisticated enough in human relations to know how to set limits for someone they like. (Remember, these children may have good Connectiveness.)
- Redefine their competitive urges into helpfulness and a desire to improve their own prior performance. If they got into trouble four times yesterday, challenge them to get into trouble only three times today!

Ethnic Conflicts

Many schools are arenas for children to work out ethnic conflicts presented to them by their parents and prior generations. Recent world problems and changes in immigration policies have created new minorities. Changing demographics in the cities and suburbs alter ethnic balances, making old minorities into new majorities. Family and cultural breakdowns are fertile ground for new identifications and affiliations, as children look for something to belong to that has meaning for them. It's rare to find a multicultural gang. Ethnicity is the easiest form of commonality; you can quickly tell whether someone is "us" or "them."

Increasing the level of personal and group interaction, training children in conflict resolution, increasing task orientation and increasing children's feelings of safety and satisfaction in school all contribute to softening the impermeable boundaries among ethnic and racial groups.

Developing helpfulness and making creative use of friend-

ship networks allows children to maintain the important racial and ethnic identities they have without compromising the climate of the school and classroom. The greater the impact of such practices in forming children's cooperative attitudes early, the more likely children will continue these attitudes later, when the pressures for intragroup cohesion/intergroup opposition become stronger.

But the problem doesn't end with cooperative learning activities in the classroom. An overall emphasis on cooperation and social responsibility is needed in schools that may be heavily affected by intergroup conflicts.

When schools are oriented primarily toward competitive and individualistic teaching methods, those children who come to school with special advantages will be more likely to succeed. These advantages may have little to do with children's innate abilities. Instead, the advantages reflect family or cultural patterns and expectations, affluence, parents' educational levels, the number of books in the home and the absence of all kinds of abuse.

Children who are disadvantaged with respect to these variables and who lose out in the ability measurements that are used in competitive or individualistic systems will grow to dislike school. They are more likely to seek solace and support (Connectiveness) in the groups to which they belong. It's no accident that the power of ethnic identification grows as children move through the grades. More important and relevant, their identification with the school as a source of comfort, safety, success and satisfaction diminishes as their accumulated failures build up.

The rhetoric surrounding ethnic issues in schools tends to drown out the simple truth that children who don't succeed in school aren't likely to enjoy it very much! Whether or not children succeed is not directly related to race, ethnicity or even family background, unless these variables are made important by the way children are taught.

Cooperative learning approaches reduce the influence of these factors, increase the effect of classroom experiences and enrich the learning environment for all children, irrespective of group affiliations.

The only way for schools to effectively combat the negative influences of ethnic identifications is by increasing children's satisfaction with school. In situations where this has occurred, ethnic distinctions seem to take second place to children's investment in learning. Self-esteem factors remain the single most important issue in whether children will be successful in school.

The most important self-esteem condition involved in children's identification with the school is their Sense of Connectiveness. Proposed solutions to ethnic issues that don't affect this condition of self-esteem will not have significant effect. The Sense of Connectiveness is enhanced in schools where cooperation and social responsibility are made the context for learning.

Chapter

8 To the Administrator: Building a Cooperative School Climate

School administration has become an increasingly hazardous vocation, similar to being a steeplejack or underwater demolitions expert! The risks are more psychological than physical, although in some schools the physical dangers aren't insignificant. As in any management position, the challenge of school administration is to improve effectiveness without increasing the work.

This book is about instilling children with the ability to act cooperatively and with a high sense of social responsibility—attributes that will have a profound effect on their personal and vocational performance long into the future.

Teaching is a very personal affair. Not everyone can teach the same way, since how one teaches is so closely related to personality, training and experience. Teachers' self-esteem is, in my opinion, the critical element in how they teach, just as it is in the way children learn. How any particular teaching method (such as cooperative learning) is applied varies according to the teacher.

Implementing innovative practices or programs is com-

plex. What works well in one situation may not work at all in another due to a different set of circumstances. Program research shows that the enthusiasm and support of administrators at every level influence how new methods will be implemented and used in their schools.

You have a significant effect on what goes on in the school, both through what you actually do and through how you're perceived by the staff and students. You are both a reality and a symbol. It's hard being a symbol, because you might mean different things to different people, and because it means you're responsible for people's behavior in indirect ways.

Your superintendent places high value on your budget control skills. Parents want you to ensure their children will be happy and successful. Some of the teachers want you to be a bold leader; others want you to facilitate only the things they want to do.

Some children know your name; others wouldn't know you if they bumped into you on the street. You are pushed and pulled in many directions every day. Being clear and consistent about what you believe and think is important isn't easy.

It's often easier to decide things yourself, but it's important to keep the staff feeling you respect their professional input into your activities. Law, custom and good community relations require you to involve parents in many of the decisions about the school's program, although it would be more efficient if you didn't have to. You attend a large number of meetings, but sometimes you wonder if it's worth the time. You'd like more contact with the children, but fitting this into your schedule isn't possible.

If you're like many school administrators, you look at the organizational complexity of your system, the raft of details with which you deal, the broad range of people with whom you communicate and ask yourself, "Where's the philosophy?"

What are the principles guiding your decisions and the interactions you have with the teachers and staff?

Running a School or Running a Business?

At a recent board meeting involving major budget slashing that made no one happy, someone in the audience suggested if we ran the schools more like a business we'd be better off. I said if we did this, we'd probably raise our prices and borrow money from the bank, neither of which is possible.

What's the difference between schools and businesses? Aren't many of the financial and managerial issues the same or similar? They are, but there's a very fundamental way in which schools are different from businesses, making the comparison metaphorical at best.

The "product" the schools try to produce is a knowledgeable, employable, principled human being, capable of flexible and adaptive behavior to meet changing circumstances. There's no other business establishment in the world that comes close to having to meet this challenge. Building cars is easy by comparison.

Schooling is a situation in which the quality of the product is highly dependent, not only on the "means of production," i.e., the teacher and the curriculum, but also on the very substance of how the organization is run. How schools and school districts are managed affects children through the mechanism of school climate, often in profound ways.

Schools are like businesses in one way, though. One principle of organizational behavior is that any level in the organization has it's most significant impact on the next lower level of the organization. So the superintendent's greatest influence is on the district office staff, theirs is on the school administrator and yours is on the teachers.

A corollary of this principle is that the more levels there are between functions in an organization, the less influence the higher levels have on the lower ones. Thus, you have less influence on the children than the teachers do. This all seems obvious, so what's the point?

The issue is that your chief focus must be on the teaching staff if you want to affect children's school experience. There's very little you can do about the children directly. Again, this seems obvious.

But here's where schools being different from businesses becomes most significant. In order to have teachers do certain things to children, such as create learning opportunities and fashion effective classroom climates, you must do to and for them what you wish them to do to and for children.

Schools that intend to emphasize cooperation and social responsibility must be institutions in which cooperation and social responsibility are practiced by the adults. Teachers' self-esteem deeply influences children's. Just as teachers are arbiters of children's self-esteem, you as the administrator have a special influence on the conditions influencing the self-esteem of the teachers. Of all the influences on classroom climate, the teachers' influence is the greatest. Similarly, among all the influences on the school climate, the administrator's influence is the greatest. Because school climate influences the way people feel, self-esteem becomes the critical variable.

Cooperation and social responsibility and the conditions influencing them are no different at the staff level than within the classroom. While all self-esteem-enhancing practices have useful influence on staff performance, building the Senses of Connectiveness and Models will have most effect on the staff's willingness to engage in methods that promote cooperation and social responsibility in students.

Building Connectiveness

- Create opportunities for teachers to share personal experiences with each other.
- Develop cooperative group tasks that require teachers to work together in order to complete them successfully.
- Have staff meetings in which problems are discussed and decisions made. Help teachers learn effective group and interpersonal strategies that facilitate problem solving and decision making.
- Create activities in which the entire staff can participate, such as projects, sports, plays and service activities.
- Develop multiple relationship opportunities: staff meeting rooms and work rooms, grade level meetings, task forces, standing committees, parties, TGIF at local "watering holes", a quiet room for retreats, off-campus meetings, staff retreats, holiday parties that include families.
- Emphasize service to others in the school and have teachers work with children to provide many opportunities for service activities in the school or community.
- Have occasions when the school devotes activities to the families or cultural and ethnic associations of the school. Provide opportunities for teachers to focus on their own heritage.
- Create opportunities for teachers to identify with the school or district through activities that enhance such identification. Engage teachers in planning and carrying out such activities.
- De-emphasize individuality and autonomy, the importance of teachers in their own classrooms while empha-

sizing cooperation and teamwork. Have many opportunities for teachers to share what they are doing in their classrooms. Encourage and support inter-class visits.

- Have clear and consistent relationship standards and talk about the norms of interpersonal behavior you wish to have within the staff.

Building Models

- Have the rules and policies that apply to staff behavior clearly available to all staff. Let staff know about the consequences associated with not fulfilling those rules and policies and implement them evenhandedly and fairly.
- Have clear standards, norms and expectations for work and behavior that are not covered by rules and policies, follow them consistently and have ways for staff to evaluate and monitor them.
- Make options clear and state the variations that will be permitted within a framework in all areas of staff functioning.
- Do things to make work in the classroom or school more enjoyable (e.g., play music, use humor, think about how a friendly atmosphere can be brought about) so teachers can associate work with pleasant feelings.
- Keep the issue of personal values and standards constantly alive for teachers so they can see how their personal attributes are valued in the school.
- Expose teachers to experts who are worthy of their emulation, and who are able to relate their experiences to the teachers'. Help teachers learn how successful people accomplish their goals.

- Make use of older or more experienced teachers as mentors or models for younger ones, while recognizing that new teachers may have special knowledge, too.
- Encourage neatness and orderliness in your school and require teachers to live up to those standards.
- Increase the range of teachers' experiences through activities that take them out of the school and by bringing many alternatives into the classroom and school.

As an administrator, you can't make things happen in your school without working through the staff. Your effect on children is indirect. This can be a source of stress because it may be unclear, sometimes, just what it is you've done for the kids!

But it's more important to realize that administrators can *keep* things from happening in their schools, by not working with and through the staff in supportive ways. In a sense, administrators have more power to keep good things from happening than to make them happen. It's a paradox of administration, and the source of much of the conflict and stress that surrounds the way people look at the role. So many people want you to do things you can't do, and don't realize how much you facilitate school improvement by simply staying out of the way!

In addition to the list of practices that can enhance the overall Senses of Connectiveness and Models in your school, there are a few key areas in which your performance will have a distinct impact on cooperation and social responsibility.

Gaining Parent and Community Support

Parents and the community play an important role in facilitating and supporting cooperation and social responsibility in the

classroom, so your efforts in this area will pay big dividends for the children.

Maintaining contacts with parents and community through all the mechanisms at your command is basic. I won't detail these mechanisms here, since they are inherent in much of administrative training. But recognize that you can't nurture these contacts effectively if you are so immersed in day-to-day administrative details you don't have time. Here's the first step on the road to creating a cooperative climate in your school: You have to gain your staff's support by taking the time to get them the necessary resources for their programs.

One of the complaints teachers have about administrators is, "They're never around when you need them!" More often than not, the staff doesn't know what the principal is doing when she or he is not at school. The staff needs to know and must have a way to find out why you're not there, until the level of trust and communication is so good that questions about your activities are put to rest.

Seeking community and parent support starts in the school; the staff must understand what you're doing, why you're doing it and how they'll benefit. They don't have the time to promote the support the school needs; they rely on you to fill this crucial role. The institutions of your community are important arenas where children can learn how cooperation and responsible behavior are important to success in life. The parents' active support at home will multiply the school's effect on their children.

The school and community view you as the leader of your school—the boss—an unfortunate business metaphor that confuses the fact that you can't do your job well unless you have the support of the staff. But because you symbolize the school in the eyes of the community, you have a special role in gaining community support.

This role creates a raft of cooperative opportunities for you

and the staff. Gaining community and parent support is an administrative function that creates pressure for greater cooperation within the school. You need to work with staff to identify what they need; you need to communicate the constraints under which you're working to gain their understanding; and you need to give them choices on how you can best use your time for their benefit. In fact, you may need to delegate some of your responsibilities to them so you have more time.

Embedding a Philosophy in the System

If you want to change your school from one emphasizing competition and individualistic learning to one emphasizing cooperative learning and social responsibility, you must work on two levels: One is the rational/cognitive level, presenting ideas, concepts, research, programs, strategies, training, assessments and all the supporting documentation and literature. The second, perhaps more important, is the affective/emotional level, where the actual experience of the staff influences their attitudes, feelings, motivation, willingness to risk and feelings of affiliation with each other. The strategies on these two levels are very different.

People usually don't change behavior for rational reasons; they change because they feel like it. Underlying all significant change, both individually and in a group context where people are changing something together, are two basic issues: People change because they have a spirit of adventure, and they change because they have a level of trust that permits them to feel safe. In the future, as an administrator, you must encourage these feelings of adventure and trust in your staff to gain their support for change.

The spirit of adventure is a quality not distributed evenly

throughout the general population of teachers. On the individual level, it has to do with the self-esteem conditions of Uniqueness and Power. People who have strengths in these two conditions are not only more likely to accept the idea of change, but are also more likely to promote it. Change within any institution, and especially in schools, will start with those who have strong Senses of Uniqueness and Power. Such people are likely to assume leadership during change and should be encouraged to do so.

Your own spirit of adventure can activate the same spirit in others if they trust you, and having your staff trust you is critical to change processes. Successful teachers are generally reluctant to make significant change in their teaching approaches because they can't foresee what rewards change will bring them. Since teaching is so personal, no teacher wants to have to teach in ways that seem foreign to his or her nature.

Building trust and inciting a spirit of adventure in the staff are the basis for embedding a new philosophy within the system. To do so along the lines we've discussed in this book means expanding the arena of cooperation and social responsibility in which the staff functions. It means engaging more staff (with you and with each other) in planning, evaluating, designing and implementing new approaches. It means staff sense your trust in their abilities to exercise authority in some areas of their performance. Trust is a two way street; we generally don't trust people who don't trust us. Building a feeling of trust in the staff means you must take the first risks in trusting them.

You also must facilitate the processes through which staff build trust in one another; the cooperative action required to change a school demands it. Intrastaff trust is built in the same way a cooperative atmosphere is built in a classroom—by increasing interactions, improving communications, promoting distribution of labor, letting people work on what they know best and having conflict resolution processes in place.

New ideas become embedded in the system as people actually experience these ideas working for them. As teachers experience the impact of an improved cooperative climate, and as trust of administration and each other grows, the spirit of adventure required for change is encouraged. When all this happens, the basic context for change is established.

Increasing Connectiveness in the Staff

The great chicken and egg problem in education is whether change occurs when people have new skills or when they have new attitudes. Logically, both are required for change to move ahead comfortably. But I think the evidence shows that changes stabilize as a result of attitude shifts within the system, not just because of new skills within a teaching staff. Teaching new skills to teachers occurs best after attitude changes have happened. Teachers then more avidly seek new skills, and motivation is everything in learning, as we know from watching children.

Shifts in attitude mean people change the way they feel about something. In self-esteem language it means a shift occurred in one of the conditions of self-esteem. Such a shift results in changes in feelings, perceptions and the meaning people attribute to their experience.

A cooperative learning climate depends, to a large extent, on the level of people's Sense of Connectiveness. If your school is like most schools, the teaching staff has many people with a very strong Sense of Connectiveness which benefits the children. Yet the overall climate of the school may not be such that teachers feel comfortable in expressing the Sense of Connectiveness at the staff level. Their Sense of Power may not be strong enough for them to assert themselves.

Changing staff attitudes toward cooperative learning and social responsibility requires the overall arena of the school to

become a place where affectionate, cooperative and affiliative behaviors occur. In other words the climate for Connectiveness must be enhanced for the staff.

As an administrator, you have an important role to play in promoting activities that result in higher Connectiveness, so more staff members can feel safe, accepted and included. You do this by reaching out to the staff when they're not expecting it and requiring little or nothing in return. If this statement seems familiar, it's because this is the basic strategy for raising the Sense of Connectiveness for anyone.

The following list suggests ways to do this:

- Invite staff to meet with you in small groups to share both successes and concerns.
- Sponsor staff parties from time to time without requiring everyone to attend.
- Set up teams, task forces and committees of staff volunteers to help you solve administrative issues.
- Visit classrooms often so teachers feel you're visiting them and the children, not judging their performance.
- Remember staff birthdays and other special events.
- Keep the door to your office open as much as possible so the staff sees you at work and you, in turn, see them.
- Resolve personal or professional disputes that may arise between staff members.
- Help individual staff members find the resources they need for special class events.

There are many things you can do to build a Sense of Connectiveness with your staff that don't require special resources or money. And the more you do, the stronger the feeling of affiliation within the school. This feeling is more

likely to result in attitudes that support program shifts toward cooperation and social responsibility.

Promoting Administrator/Teacher Relationships

You may recall the basic template for building cooperation in classrooms is the cooperative relationship between teachers and their students. In the same way the basic template for a climate of cooperation in the school is the cooperative relationship between the administrator and the teachers.

Cooperation works both ways. But someone must make the first move to establish a set of norms to guide the relationship in the future. In the last section I listed a number of ways you could improve the climate for building the Sense of Connectiveness with the teachers. Building a climate for cooperation not only includes those Connectiveness issues, but also requires actions that enhance all the conditions of self-esteem.

Administrators, like teachers, who have a higher Sense of Connectiveness, will have an easier, more natural approach to building cooperation. Administrators who don't have high Connectiveness will have to work harder. The following personal qualities will help you build a cooperative climate in your school:

- A willingness to listen to what people are saying stronger than a need to convince others you're right.
- A capacity for empathy that communicates your *desire* to understand someone even when you don't.
- A sincere affection for people; this makes it hard for others to maintain a negative attitude toward you, because you don't have one toward them.

- A flexible nature so you don't always play the same role toward staff members; this allows you to relate in different ways for different occasions.
- High enough self-esteem so you're not hurt, angered, frustrated or resentful when people disagree with you, but remain confident you can either win them over or change your viewpoint, whichever is required.

If you don't naturally possess these qualities, you must find ways to act as if you do, because these characteristics are at the root of staff trusting you enough to cooperate with you. The two-way street of cooperation means staff must be able to ask for your help when they need it, and assume you'll give help willingly, while they, in turn, give you their cooperation when you ask for it and know you'll acknowledge them for it.

The level of trust people have for each other is determined, over time, by the degree to which each has fulfilled the promises made to the other. For staff to trust you, they have to believe you keep your promises. You don't need to break many promises to engender mistrust. Broken promises are remembered longer than those that have been kept.

The following guidelines will help you maintain the trust required to build a cooperative climate with your staff. These principles apply to individual relationships as well as to groups.

- Don't make promises to mollify staff if you believe your chances of keeping the promises are slim.
- Don't blame others outside the school or circumstances beyond your control for your not having kept a promise.
- Don't be the one to make a private promise public; only the person to whom you made the promise should do this.
- Don't make promises and ask part of the staff to keep it

confidential from another part. Perceived favoritism instantly undermines trust.

- Report your progress in moving toward keeping a promise; this way if obstacles arise, your staff will have been forewarned.
- Make promises! This means you're willing to make a commitment to a future course of action. Many administrators are reluctant to make promises. They want to play it safe and avoid disappointing others. This communicates a lack of courage and supports mistrust in subtle ways. If staff see you as reluctant to make commitments, sooner or later they will stop asking for them.

When programs are changing and new methods are being adopted, all staff members become anxious, even though they may also be excited, curious, energized and dedicated. They need to know you'll keep this implied promise: You'll remain supportive, non-critical and helpful until they become confident in their abilities. They also want to know you'll keep the promises you've made about resources, materials and other professional needs they may have.

Helping Teachers Change

A teacher with high Connectiveness and a teacher with low Connectiveness often seem alien to each other. Teachers with high Connectiveness are inclined to use cooperative methods and emphasize social responsibility because it feels good. Teachers with low Connectiveness aren't instinctively drawn to teaching methods that promote affiliation.

Teachers' background and training often determine what methods they use, but their self-esteem profiles influence the

ones with which they feel comfortable. Teachers with high Connectiveness may feel uncomfortable using competitive and individualistic methods if they don't have alternatives. Many potentially good young teachers leave the profession because they can't find a satisfying way to teach.

The teachers most inclined toward cooperative classroom climates and teaching styles are those with high Connectiveness. Those most inclined to move the entire school in that direction combine high Connectiveness with the capacity to envision and the drive and assertiveness to bring the idea about. Teachers with lower Connectiveness are less avid, and teachers with overall lower self-esteem will not take active leadership in the effort to create cooperative classrooms.

Self-esteem factors influence people's attitudes about change and the way they behave during change processes. Most schools are small enough arenas so the individual characteristics of teachers affect the change process more dramatically than in larger groups, such as an entire school district. As site administrator, you are more likely to deal with those individual variations than administrators at higher levels in the organization. It's good to know with whom you're dealing!

- Teachers with high Connectiveness need to feel they are part of a highly affectional group that is changing together in a cooperative, supportive way. They will resist change until this atmosphere is established.
- Teachers with high Uniqueness need to feel they will have more opportunity for independence and creativity and will be allowed to do things their own way if they support change in the school. They will resist change until they trust that their individuality will be respected.
- Teachers with *high Power* need to feel they can justify competitive or individualistic approaches. They will resist change until they're convinced that change will allow them more success in realizing their objectives than the old methods.

- Teachers with high Models need to feel they have a plan based on good information before they are comfortable with changing. They will be impressed with research and the evidence that others are successfully using new methods. They will resist change until they fully understand everything.

Any method used to bring about change in a school's program will be more comfortable for some teachers than others. Some people are affected by change itself irrespective of its content. Some like it, some don't. Knowing something about the individual self-esteem characteristics of the teachers in your school will help you approach them in a flexible manner, more likely to elicit their support for your programs.

Cooperation and social responsibility are, as you have seen, heavily enmeshed in issues dealing with the Sense of Connectiveness. Moving the school in this direction means emphasizing that condition of self-esteem in many ways. The more you can create a climate in which the Sense of Connectiveness is strong, the more people will see the benefit of such an overall school program.

The easiest way for a school to emphasize cooperation and social responsibility is for you to select teachers with a high Sense of Connectiveness. High Connectiveness will allow these teachers to contribute to the climate, as well as to feel more comfortable in a school that values human relations.

For the site administrator to feel singularly responsible for bringing about change toward a cooperative school program is counter-productive. You can't do it alone. You absolutely must share the responsibility for developing the program with your staff. Not doing so creates the strange paradox of trying to bring about cooperation through an individual effort!

At the beginning of this chapter, I stated that the goal of good management is to improve effectiveness without increasing the work. Building a school based on cooperation and a sense of social responsibility is just the ticket for doing this.

Chapter

9 To the School Board: Creating a Cooperative District Attitude

The enterprise of education is getting avidly knocked about these days. Almost everyone is getting into the act. Professional educators and state legislators are at each other, seeking to affix ultimate responsibility for what is wrong. School boards* are somewhat protected from this process since the professionals can't trash the board if they want to keep their jobs, and the legislators, to some degree, don't trash school boards that employ fellow politicians. Yet board members can rightly feel their arena of control and authority is becoming circumscribed because of law, labor contracts and the imposing indices of social and family dysfunction.

Many of the current problems in education are more likely to be handled well in a context emphasizing cooperation and social responsibility. These qualities will increasingly become the attributes of personal and communal success as we enter the twenty-first century. We know how to teach children the

* The term "school board" will be used while recognizing that such bodies may have different titles in various parts of the country. The author has been a school board member for twelve years.

basic educational skills, but the quality and results of that teaching vary greatly from place to place. In many places, the overall climate in which those basic skills are being taught is unsupportive. This is the reason so much teaching seems to "fail." It is not simply because the children and their families are not prepared to learn or because teachers are incompetent.

Local boards can have an impact on the climate of their school districts, influencing whether they become good places for teachers to work and thus for children to learn. The evidence is clear that promoting cooperative learning strategies and emphasizing social responsibility work better than other educational approaches in promoting solid learning, as well as functional social attitudes. School boards have more power to influence the future direction of education than they may think.

Being a member of a school board can be a daunting experience. It's hard to know whether to act as a concerned parent, community member, educator or politician. Different issues call for different roles from each board member. Depending on the size of your board, your point of view on any matter can count for a little or a lot. One vote among five or seven members sometimes feels unimportant. Most votes are *pro forma* since so many actions are procedural to conform to your state's laws.

Individual opinions finally give way to the board's decision, often creating a compromise among members. You hope the data and information you receive from staff is accurate, so that decisions are based on facts, not fantasies. Differences of opinion are tolerable if all the board members are well informed and mature and real conflict and rancor are avoided as much as possible. Many things get worked out between meetings if the superintendent is sensitive to the different opinions among board members.

The core of the board's work is cooperative effort; it's the only way anything gets done. How well the board cooperates

has a dominating influence on the quality of decisions made. And children's performance is influenced by the quality of those decisions. How children are affected by the school board's actions often seems indirect and obscure, but the climate of cooperation set by the board has a subtle but pervasive influence, over time, on what children experience at school.

Because of the complexity of the modern educational system, the school school board is in a paradoxical position. While you want to make sure good things are happening for children, you can't be too involved at the program level. Policy making about budget, personnel and laws is the proper arena for the board. Too much meddling with management and program usually leads to low morale and bad decisions. Everyone holds the board accountable, but in most instances you don't know what's happened until after the fact. You must hope you've selected the best people to be your agents in managing the district.

Practicing the Program

The school board can play a significant role in building a school district in which cooperation and social responsibility are central themes. This book has emphasized the central role climate plays in influencing children's willingness to cooperate and act in socially responsible ways. The board has an important effect on the overall climate of cooperation and social responsibility throughout the district.

The following standards will enable staff and the public to perceive the board as cooperative:

- By the time the board votes, there's little disagreement. Through thorough discussion the board has arrived at a high quality decision acceptable to all the members.
- There is an atmosphere of goodwill that keeps disagree-

ment from becoming discord. Board members question each other's ideas, not each other's motives.

- The relations between board and management staff are convivial, respectful, forthright and characterized by good communication—in a word, cooperative.
- The board shows a willingness to listen to anyone having an opinion, within clear but liberal guidelines for discussion. This shows the board is open to good ideas from any source.
- Board members demonstrate they are informed about issues coming before them, showing that all members are doing their jobs and sharing the work equitably.
- The board presses toward unanimity as much as possible, not settling for majority votes that signify winners and losers. Nonunanimous votes will tend to arise over matters of principle, showing that the board respect its members personal integrity.

This cooperative spirit at the top of the organization affects people subtly, but pervasively. The board leads by example.

Leading by example isn't always enough, however, and there are more direct ways the board can influence the district, and indirectly influence the classroom, in the direction of cooperation and social responsibility without having to step on administrative and professional prerogative.

The Board as Goalkeeper

The board should be the keeper of the district's goals. Annual attention to these goals, emphasizing the way decisions exemplify them and taking them seriously are key actions. Board and district goals should express the intention to build coop-

erative and socially responsible attitudes and competences in children. The board doesn't have to specify the method for doing this, but it can indicate it wishes the district to move in this direction.

Most districts have goals these days. Some even use these goals to influence the direction of program. Districts that have goals and take them seriously do better than those that don't. Many boards are reluctant to define goals, feeling they're not competent to define educational outcomes. But boards can clarify what they'd like to see children be good at when they leave the district. Basic academic skills are always an important goal, but attitudes and skills that enable children to continue learning and preparing for the real world are equally important.

If a board places attention on goals and engages staff and the community in helping to determine them, the teaching staff gets the message that the board is serious about wanting certain outcomes to occur. Having goals in the area of cooperation and social responsibility is the way the board supports the staff and directs the program.

Including Parents, Teachers and the Community

The more the board includes other people in its work, the more the ethic of cooperation becomes spread throughout the district. Such inclusion doesn't have to result in the board watering down its authority or responsibility. Getting people involved enriches most decisions.

When the district has an idea about where it's going, it can prepare the way by having planning mechanisms in place. The more these planning mechanisms include teachers, non-certificated staff, parents and community members, the more likely decisions made by the board will have broad acceptance.

Tasks forces, committees, study groups and district organizations such as parent clubs can perform many functions. They give the board access to many opinions on any topic. They inform community and teachers about important district issues. They allow others to develop expertise in a narrow area freeing the board for more general oversight. They diffuse conflict by engaging diverse interests in face-to-face discussions about controversial issues, without the responsibility for deciding them.

This approach sets a standard for inclusiveness and cooperation in dealing with important issues. Managers within the district are empowered to engage people at every level in cooperative decision making. Sooner or later, the effect of this reaches the classroom through the mechanisms of school climate. It may take a few years for the style of inclusion to permeate a district, but if the board is persistent in this approach, it will happen.

Selecting Cooperative Personnel

Most boards appoint the superintendent, who hires everyone else, although this is not universal. No matter how the chief administrative officer of the district is selected, it's important this person be interested in cooperation and social responsibility if these qualities are to prosper in the district.

The way these qualities were developed with the adults with whom she or he formerly worked will have more to do with future performance than this person's ideas about how children should be educated. Although ideas are also important, past performance is perhaps the best indicator of future performance.

Hiring people who like and get along with others is a good thing to do, even in business or financial areas. It's harder to

create a climate for cooperation and social responsibility with personnel who don't get along. The capacity for working well with others is a distinct skill that has nothing to do with the technical skills required for different jobs. Yet this capacity has everything to do with how technical skills are manifested to create an overall positive or negative work climate.

At every level of an organization, people will hire those who are more like themselves than not. Issues such as gender, race, ethnicity and social class have been used as measures of commonality, rather than appropriate job-related factors. When competence, cooperativeness, capacity for hard work, and moral and ethical integrity are work standards, excellence can spread throughout an organization. But in order to start this process, the highest levels of the organization must have a commitment to such factors and represent them personally.

Appendix A

Further Reading

These books have been selected from the extensive literature on cooperation and social responsibility. Taken together, they provide an overview of the theory, practice and research work in this area.

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Appendix B

Personal Arena Behavior Checklists

The following checklists will help you identify and understand behavior associated with each condition of self-esteem. You can use the checklists to help you determine which condition is a child's critical condition. The larger the number of index behaviors observed, and the greater the frequency or intensity of the behaviors, the greater the difficulty the child has with that particular condition.

Connectiveness

- ☐ Is easily distracted and spends much time watching others in many different settings.
- ☐ When allowed to choose seating will elect to sit near doors, walls or at the periphery of the group.
- ☐ Wears excessive clothing, relative to the activity or the temperature. Doesn't like to remove hat, jacket or other outdoor apparel when indoors.
- ☐ Does not communicate easily and is unable to listen to others and understand their viewpoint.
- ☐ Is shy, has few or no friends, and actively avoids social situations. Is unaware of others' interests or needs.
- ☐ Talks negatively about family or ethnic group.
- ☐ Seldom, if ever, volunteers to help others.
- ☐ Is disliked by peers.
- ☐ Acts uncomfortable around adults, or else constantly seeks their attention.
- ☐ Always wants to be in the center of things, and/or constantly tries to be noticed.
- ☐ More often relates to things or animals rather than people. Carries a lot of "stuff" around in pockets and bags, and values it excessively. Spends a lot of time with pets, takes them to bed and so on.
- ☐ Has trouble stating ideas and feelings directly and asking for needs.
- ☐ Is uncomfortable about touching others or being touched.
- ☐ Makes others uncomfortable when touching them. Doesn't have the "appropriate touch" in many situations.

Uniqueness

- ☐ Seems to be in reverie frequently. Stares abstractedly at walls or ceilings while not paying attention.
- ☐ Seems to talk to self or make noticeable noises.
- ☐ Speaks negatively about self and accomplishments frequently.
- ☐ Takes little or no pride in appearance.
- ☐ Shows little imagination. Rarely comes up with original ideas, but they are quite unusual if and when they do appear.
- ☐ Demonstrates little regard for own ideas, interests or abilities. Rarely expresses an opinion or feeling different from what others have expressed.
- ☐ Does things as told, rarely improvises.
- ☐ Is uncomfortable when called on or singled out.
- ☐ Seeks praise and recognition often, but becomes embarrassed, denies or disregards recognition when it is given.
- ☐ Shows off when it is inappropriate.
- ☐ Usually conforms to others' wishes or ideas, particularly peers'. Is a follower, and rarely, if ever, a leader.
- ☐ Interacts with others in an awkward and mechanical way, categorizing people in simplistic terms and being critical of their personal characteristics. Tries to find ways to be like others rather than accept differences.
- ☐ Rarely, if ever, takes delight in personal accomplishments, even if the accomplishment results in praise or recognition from others.

Models

- ☐ Gets confused easily and wastes time with apparently aimless activity.
- ☐ Becomes obsessively involved with activities that are unrelated to the task at hand.
- ☐ Is poorly organized in both thinking and behavior.
- ☐ Is confused easily about what is right and wrong.
- ☐ Has a difficult time deciding what to do or say, even in situations that should be quite familiar.
- ☐ Responds to instruction and directions in a resistant manner that is always associated with confusion or ambivalence.
- ☐ Is unsure about methods and purposes that are associated with an activity.
- ☐ Will continually seek directions or insist there is only one way to do something, persisting obsessively in doing it that way, despite failure.
- ☐ Has rigid standards and tends to get upset easily when others don't conform to those standards.
- ☐ Avoids or acts awkwardly in social situations requiring some formal etiquette.
- ☐ Doesn't respond well to instruction and expects not to know what is going on.

Power

- ☐ Avoids taking responsibility. Will not initiate needed projects on own and will have to be reminded about required duties.
- ☐ Shies away from challenging tasks and won't take risks in areas where judgments may be made about success or failure.
- ☐ Has limited skills in many areas and does not actively pursue improving skills.
- ☐ Has poor control over body. Is often awkward or physically inept at common tasks, although may have prowess in some sports.
- ☐ Frequently acts helpless and gives up on tasks, even simple ones, when obstacles, even minor ones, occur.
- ☐ Avoids being in charge of others.
- ☐ Lacks emotional self-control. Anger, fear, hysteria, inability to deal with frustrations, crying and depression occur easily, often in combination with each other.
- ☐ Always wants to be the leader or have own way, but will do so in a way leading to failure or conflict. Will lead in such a way that others must take responsibility in order to avoid failure.
- ☐ Shows resistance to directives through foot-dragging, avoidance and denial.
- ☐ Avoids stating needs and interests assertively and often goes along with others, especially when they have strong opinions or ideas.
- ☐ Is often stubborn and resistant in situations in which no threat or possibility of failure is imminent.
- ☐ Blames others for things that are obviously not their responsibility whenever failure or problems occur.

Appendix C

Interpersonal Arena Techniques for Building Self-Esteem

There are a number of strategies you can use in the Interpersonal Arena to build each of the four conditions in children. The following lists offer some suggestions.

Techniques to Build Connectiveness

- Show affection directly, often through brief, undemanding physical contact (e.g., patting shoulders, touching hands).
- Show approval when behavior justifies it, even though the children have previously done something to elicit criticism.
- Be public with praise, saying positive things about the children or their performance so others can hear, but don't require them to become the center of attention if they show discomfort.
- Let children know when they have contributed to the overall progress of the group or class. Make such comments public and let others know about the contribution.
- Share your own feelings, even though the children may disparage or criticize them.

- Share your interests, hobbies and activities, even though the children may not indicate interest.
- Show approval in some way when you notice the children have related well to others.
- Listen non-judgmentally as much as possible. Do not feel everything children say needs to be commented on, agreed or disagreed with, criticized or praised.
- Respect children's relationships with friends and provide opportunities for friends to work together as well as encouraging new relationships.
- Spend time alone with children when other classmates are not present.
- Find ways to do something special with children that satisfies their particular interests or needs.
- Use indirect methods of communicating, such as leaving notes in books or special personal comments on returned assignments.
- Respect children's need to have object relations when interpersonal ones are troubling, so that children will not be prematurely sanctioned for playing with something while trying to work.

Techniques to Build Uniqueness

- Notice and affirm special characteristics and talents, even though they may be unusual or not to your taste.
- Encourage children to express their own ideas, even though they are different from your own.
- Provide alternative ways for children to express feelings;

writing if it's easier than speaking, drawing if it's easier than writing, and so on.

- Communicate acceptance, even when you must limit children's behavior.
- Identify the positive aspects of unusual ideas or behavior and compliment them, rather than criticizing the negative aspects.
- Respect children's privacy, especially their desks, space and possessions.
- Allow children to perform duties and responsibilities in their own way, as much as possible.
- Find out what children think is special about themselves and provide opportunities for expressing their specialness.
- Help children find the resources and opportunities for exploring special interests.
- Avoid using ridicule and shame, even if there is a need to limit or stop a child's behavior.
- Try to understand the special circumstances of family or background influencing children's behavior and let the children know that you understand.
- Help children find effective ways to express themselves so as to help themselves and others.

Techniques to Build Models

- You are the primary model for children in your classroom, and your behavior, in general, has an impact on them. The more consistently, fairly and ethically you can behave, with conscious attention to the values and beliefs that underlie your actions, the more the children will be helped.

- Help children understand what they believe by giving them an opportunity to express their beliefs in contexts where they will not feel challenged or criticized.
- Help children set goals for their lives and learning, while recognizing that such goals may be short-lived. Help children accept the fact that goals change over time.
- Have children face the consequences of their actions, without trying to shield them from harm they may have caused others.
- Help children learn how to do the things they are required to do at a high level of excellence.
- Set, maintain and hold to very high standards in all things you do with children, while recognizing and accepting that they will not always be able to live up to them. Progress toward a high standard should be seen as a success.
- Emphasize strengths rather than handicaps or liabilities; stress the positive rather than negative; point out successes more quickly than failures.
- Share what you believe with children in appropriate and relevant ways, without requiring their adherence to your beliefs.
- Always clarify what, why, where, when and how when assigning a task or duty to children.

Techniques to Build Power

- Encourage personal responsibility by asking questions more often than you make statements. Show how children's choices have produced the results they obtained.

- Help children understand how their own decision-making processes work.
- Help children evaluate their own problem-solving processes and teach them ways to solve problems effectively.
- Affirm success, even though children indicate that they feel they have failed. Show which parts of an activity were successful and which parts weren't.
- Acknowledge and show respect for children's current level of competence in any area, as well as showing how to increase competence.
- Encourage children to set *short-range* objectives and show them how to develop a short-range plan for accomplishing them successfully. Fight the notion that things are out of control.
- Acknowledge that the children have had a positive effect on others when it is appropriate, and seek evidence that this has occurred.
- Provide lots of alternatives when asking children to make choices, but make sure the limits of the available alternatives are clear.
- Hold children accountable for events that are truly under their control or influence, even if they seem to indicate they were controlled by other forces or events.
- Help children set limits, especially in regard to what they will not do to others and not let others do to them; and show them how to honor and maintain those limits. Acknowledge the difficulty of setting and keeping to the limits and disciplines one sets up for oneself.

Appendix D

Group Arena Techniques for Building Self-Esteem

There are a number of strategies you can use in the Group Arena to build each of the four conditions in children. The following lists offer some suggestions. The techniques suggested are applicable both for classrooms and the school as a whole.

Techniques to Build Connectiveness

- Create opportunities for children to share personal experiences with each other.
- Develop cooperative learning or group tasks which require children to work together in order to complete them successfully.
- Have class or group meetings in which problems are discussed and decisions made. Help children learn effective group and interpersonal skills that facilitate problem solving and decision making.
- Create activities in which the entire class or group can participate, such as projects, sports, plays and service activities.
- Develop alternative relationship opportunities, remem-

bering that children connect to people, places and things. A "calming teddy bear" children can hold when feeling anxious, a "safe desk" children can sit at when feeling unsafe in relationship to others, and a "time-out" space or room children can visit when relations are becoming problematic are some possibilities.

- Emphasize service to others in the classroom or group and provide many opportunities for the group to engage in service activities in the school or community.
- Have occasions in which the focus is on the families or cultural and ethnic associations of the class or group. Provide opportunities for children to focus on their own heritage.
- Create opportunities for children to identify with the school or organization through activities that enhance such identification. Engage children in planning and carrying out such activities.
- Organize learning teams so associations around the work of the class or group become normal and natural.
- Increase the number of special events, parties and outings that the class or group is responsible for.
- De-emphasize individuality and autonomy while emphasizing cooperation and teamwork. Do not be put off or embarrassed by being disparaged. Recognize that avoiding being cooperative is more often a result of lack of skill in cooperative behavior than a rejection of it.
- Have clear and consistent relationship standards, with appropriate displays and reminders. Have positive standards—"Be Helpful to Others"—as well as negative ones—"No Fighting."

Techniques to Build Uniqueness

- Have opportunities for children to do projects where personal expression is not graded: art projects, books, scrapbooks, and so on.
- Design activities in which differences among people are emphasized, helping children understand how being different from each other is acceptable and desirable.
- Observe children in your classroom or group carefully in order to identify special attributes that they will not express directly to you.
- Develop activities in which children's special interests and needs can determine the use of materials and products: personal essays and stories, art projects and other self-selected activities.
- Have a variety of learning opportunities available in the classroom.
- Allow as much free time as possible where children can choose their own activities within clearly described limits.
- Create special roles within the classroom or group. Make sure each child has the opportunity to play different roles with respect to the group.
- Provide assignments requiring children to assess and clarify their personal values and beliefs and allow them the opportunity to compare theirs with others.
- Provide multiple rewards and opportunities for individual recognition so all children can achieve some special status.

Techniques to Build Models

- State rules, and consequences for breaking them, clearly and follow through consistently.
- Have clear standards for work and behavior and follow them consistently.
- Make options clear and state the variations that will be permitted within a framework.
- Do things to make work in the classroom or organization more enjoyable (e.g., play music, use humor) so children can associate work and learning with pleasant feelings.
- Keep the issue of personal values and standards of behavior constantly in front of children by showing how such factors apply to whatever they do.
- Expose children to adults who are worthy of their emulation, and who are able to relate their experiences to the children's. Help children learn how successful people accomplish their goals, through real life association, literature or film.
- Share your personal values and interests with children and invite them, as much as possible, to involve themselves in your interests in ways that are appropriate and relevant.
- Make use of tutors and assistants who are slightly older or more experienced than your children. Children can learn a lot from role models who are only slightly more advanced than they are.
- Encourage neatness and orderliness in your classroom or school and require children to live up to those standards.

- Increase the range of children's experiences through activities that take them out of the school and by bringing many alternatives into the classroom and school.

Techniques to Build Power

- Allow children to participate as much as possible in defining their learning goals, what is to be done and how.
- Give children as much choice as possible about when and how to do things. Maximize alternatives and always try to have at least two options in any activity.
- Have children act as teachers and tutors to each other and to younger people, especially in areas where they show competence. Help them find ways to share their skills.
- Involve children in setting rules for the classroom, group or school. Make such involvement meaningful by giving them the responsibility and resources to monitor the rules they set.
- Help children acquire better control over their feelings and physical bodies through movement, dance, sports and exercises.
- Pay special attention to interpersonal skills as a special skill area and develop learning activities to teach such skills.
- Help children develop a stronger sense of the relationship between work and benefits by creating "economies" that provide concrete rewards for successful performance. Mimic the real world as much as possible.

- Teach democratic decision-making processes, use them as much as possible, and help children acquire skills to work with and influence the groups in which they participate.
- Allow children to work at their level of competence as long as possible before requiring them to proceed. Knowing what one can do well is a more useful awareness than knowing what one still hasn't learned.
- Help children understand their own learning styles and teach them more effective ways to learn things.

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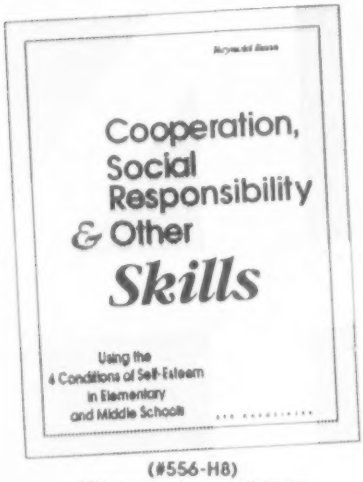
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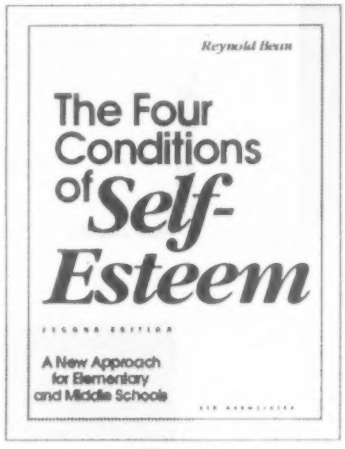

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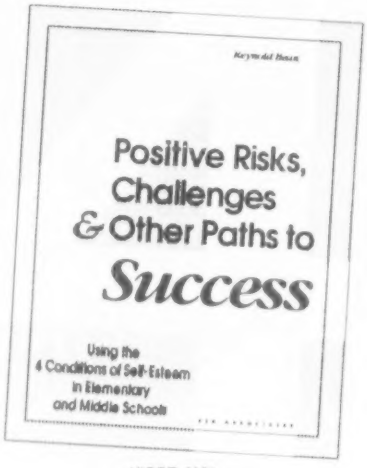
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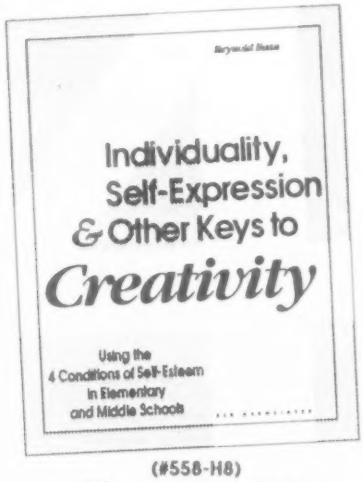
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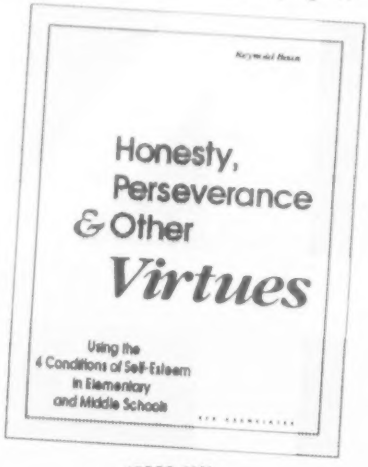
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